VISION 2050

A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region

Puget Sound Regional Council

Puget Sound Regional Council

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Resolution PSRC-A-2020-02
A RESOLUTION of the Puget Sound Regional Council Adopting VISION 2050

WHEREAS, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is designated by the governor of the State of Washington, under federal and state laws, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the central Puget Sound region encompassing King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties; and

WHEREAS, as the MPO and RTPO for the four-county region, PSRC has responsibilities under federal and state laws, including the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C (FHWA) and 49 CFR Part 613, Subpart A (FTA)), the Federal Clean Air Act (42 USC Section 7401-7671q), the Washington Clean Air Act (RCW 70.94.37), the state Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), and related RTPO planning provisions (RCW 47.80); and

WHEREAS, the Interlocal Agreement signed by all PSRC members establishes the agency as a forum for collaborative work on regional growth management and transportation planning and other issues requiring regional coordination and cooperation, including maintaining the adopted regional growth strategy that addresses regional issues including transportation, open space, air and water quality, economic development, and regional facilities, as well as producing the regional transportation plan; and

WHEREAS, Washington Administrative Code 365-196-305 recommends that multicounty planning policies should use an existing regional agency, such as the RTPO, to develop, adopt, and administer the multicounty planning policies; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, PSRC was affirmed as the agency responsible for meeting the Growth Management Act requirement for multicounty planning policies, and the agency adopted the 1990 VISION 2020 policies as the multicounty planning policies; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, PSRC adopted revised multicounty planning policies; and in 1995 adopted the VISION 2020 Update pursuant to the above referenced responsibilities and functions; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, PSRC adopted VISION 2040 with revised multicounty planning policies pursuant to the above referenced responsibilities and functions; and

WHEREAS, the PSRC Executive Board initiated the update of VISION 2040 in December 2017 with direction to build on the work of VISION 2040; to be an ambitious strategy for the region; to work towards realizing the goals of VISION 2040; to reflect the diversity of the region; and to make VISION more accessible and usable; and

WHEREAS, the central Puget Sound region is forecast to reach a population of about 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, PSRC issued a Determination of Significance for the update of VISION 2040 under the State Environmental Policy Act and engaged in formal integrated scoping for the planning process and environmental review, which concluded with the Growth Management Policy Board's approval of the VISION 2050 Scoping Report in June 2018; and

WHEREAS, PSRC prepared a Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for VISION 2050 pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act that considered a range of growth alternatives, and which supplements the VISION 2040 Final Environmental Impact Statement (2008); and

WHEREAS, consistent with federal and state mandates, the Growth Management Policy Board recommended a draft VISION 2050 document to reflect and incorporate planning work in the region completed under the Growth Management Act; to refine the multicounty planning policies to address important common issues and areas of regional agreement affecting growth management, the environment, the economy, and transportation; to establish new implementing actions to continue progress in achieving the regional VISION to the year 2050; and to establish monitoring efforts to evaluate the extent to which the regional VISION is being achieved; and

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Policy Board considered the analysis of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS); technical reports prepared by staff; comments submitted during scoping, the Draft SEIS review, and the draft plan review; and conducted deliberative discussions to develop VISION 2050 and recommends its adoption; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Board considered the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, the engagement process and comments on the draft plan, the technical analysis, the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and deliberative discussion that led to the formation of the plan and recommends adoption of VISION 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Growth Strategy, related provisions, and Executive Board amendments to the final recommended VISION 2050 fall within the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act; and

WHEREAS, VISION 2050 is necessary to provide future land use assumptions and a common framework for the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Regional Economic Strategy, as well as countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans; and

WHEREAS, consistent with federal and state mandates, state environmental requirements, and with the PSRC's Interlocal Agreement, Public Participation Plan and other operating procedures, PSRC has worked with local, state and federal jurisdictions and agencies in a continuing, cooperative and detailed planning process; it has made supporting materials available for public review, conducted public hearings, surveys, workshops, open houses, and other efforts, including providing extensive data and information related to the update on the PSRC website, in order to involve agencies, communities, businesses, interest groups, and individuals to provide input, discussion and review of VISION 2050 and its related Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; and it has incorporated in these documents the work of local governments and other member agencies, as well as the comments of individuals, businesses, tribes, and interests throughout the region; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Puget Sound Regional Council General Assembly adopts VISION 2050 as the growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation vision for the central Puget Sound region, meeting state Growth Management Act and State Environmental Policy Act requirements, and in so doing reaffirms its commitment to an integrated regional approach to growth management, the environment, the economy, and transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VISION 2050 supersedes VISION 2040 (2008).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VISION 2050 supersedes the Growing Transit Communities Strategy as the regional equitable transit-oriented development strategy pursuant to RCW 81.112.350.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Assembly establishes that the multicounty planning policies and related goals satisfy the requirements for regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Board is authorized to make technical amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy to reclassify cities and unincorporated areas within the VISION 2050 regional geographies framework for the exclusive purpose of establishing countywide growth targets as required by the Growth Management Act. Other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Board, in consultation with the policy boards as needed, is authorized to make amendments for designation of regional centers, update implementation actions, and direct technical updates and corrections to VISION 2050.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that PSRC staff is directed to prepare, reproduce and distribute the final VISION 2050 document and correct any non-substantive errors or omissions in the document.

ADOPTED by the Assembly this 29 day of October 2020

_____
Bruce Dammeier
Executive, Pierce County
President, Puget Sound Regional Council

ATTEST:

_____
Josh Brown,
Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council

VISION 2050

A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region

Puget Sound Regional Council

Adopted October 29, 2020

Puget Sound

Puget Sound is the largest marine estuary by volume in the United States. It connects the region to the Pacific Ocean and joins Washington and British Columbia together as part of the greater Salish Sea. The Snohomish, Puyallup, Green, Duwamish, Cedar, and many other rivers and streams flow through the central Puget Sound region and define distinct river basins that encompass cities, farms, forests, and mountains. It is this unique and remarkable natural environment that has drawn people to Puget Sound and sustained them for thousands of years.

Ancestral Lands of the Coast Salish

Puget Sound is a part of a larger area that has been the traditional aboriginal territory of the Coast Salish peoples, who live around the Salish Sea in what is now Washington State and the Canadian province of British Columbia. The Coast Salish Tribes have lived here since time immemorial and while each tribe is unique, all share in having a deep historical connection and legacy of respect for the land and natural resources. These sovereign tribal nations enrich the region through environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and economic development, and collaborate with local governments to shape the region's future.

A Dynamic Region

From vibrant urban neighborhoods to charming small towns, the region is rich with a diversity of distinct communities that are now home to more than 4 million people. From timber to shipbuilding, aviation to tech, the region's economy continues to innovate, transform, and attract people from across the U.S. and world.

The Puget Sound Regional Council

The region's local governments come together at the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to make decisions about transportation, growth management, and economic development.

PSRC serves King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties, along with cities and towns, tribal governments, ports, and state and local transportation agencies within the region.

PSRC is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region.

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Figure 1 – Central Puget Sound Region

A Vision for 2050

The central Puget Sound region provides an exceptional quality of life and opportunity for all, connected communities, a spectacular natural environment, and an innovative, thriving economy.

In 2050…

- **Climate.** The region's contribution to climate change has been substantially reduced.
- **Community.** Distinct, unique communities are supported throughout the region.
- **Diversity.** The region's diversity continues to be a strength. People from all backgrounds are welcome, and displacement due to development pressure is lessened.
- **Economy.** Economic opportunities are open to everyone, the region competes globally, and has sustained a high quality of life. Industrial, maritime, and manufacturing opportunities are maintained.
- **Environment.** The natural environment is restored, protected, and sustained, preserving and enhancing natural functions and wildlife habitats.
- **Equity.** All people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential.
- **Health.** Communities promote physical, social, and mental well-being so that all people can live healthier and more active lives.
- **Housing.** A range of housing types ensures that healthy, safe, and affordable housing choices are available and accessible for all people throughout the region.
- **Innovation.** The region has a culture of innovation that embraces and responds to change.
- **Mobility and Connectivity.** A safe, affordable, and efficient transportation system connects people and goods to where they need to go, promotes economic and environmental vitality, and supports the Regional Growth Strategy.
- **Natural Resources.** Natural resources are sustainably managed, supporting the continued viability of resource-based industries, such as forestry, agriculture, and aquaculture.
- **Public Facilities and Services.** Public facilities and services support the region's communities and plans for growth in a coordinated, fair, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- **Resilience.** The region's communities plan for and are prepared to respond to potential impacts from natural and human hazards.
- **Rural Areas.** Rural communities and character are strengthened, enhanced, and sustained.

Toward a Sustainable Future

The combined efforts of individuals, governments, service providers, organizations, and the private sector are needed to achieve the region's vision and desired outcomes. VISION 2050 is the shared regional plan for moving toward a sustainable and more equitable future. It encourages decision-makers to make wise use of existing resources and planned transit investments while achieving the region's shared vision. VISION 2050 sets forth a pathway that strengthens economic, social, and environmental resiliency, while enhancing the region's ability to cope with adverse trends such as climate change and unmet housing needs. As the region experiences more growth, VISION 2050 seeks to provide housing, mobility options, and services in more sustainable ways. Most importantly, VISION 2050 is a call to action to meet the needs of a growing population while considering the current needs of residents. VISION 2050 recognizes that clean air, health, life expectancy, and access to jobs and good education can vary dramatically by neighborhood. VISION 2050 works to rectify the inequities of the past, especially for communities of color and people with low incomes.

The region is expected to grow by 1.8 million people by 2050, reaching a total population of 5.8 million. An anticipated 1.2 million more jobs are forecast by 2050. The region's population in 2050 will be older and more diverse, with smaller households than today. Planning for this much growth is difficult, and VISION 2050 recognizes that local, state, and federal governments are all challenged to keep up with the needs of a growing and changing population.
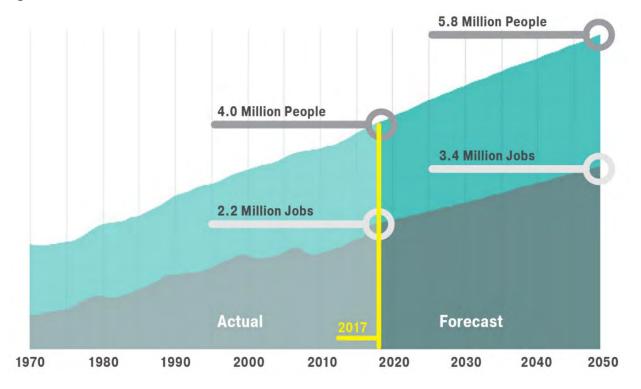
Figure 2 – Historic and Forecast Growth

Over the last decade, sprawl has been curtailed and growth has largely occurred within urban areas, helping to preserve healthy and productive farms, forests, and rural lands. City and neighborhood centers are thriving with vibrant new businesses and the addition of thousands of people and jobs. Former low-density suburbs such as Lynnwood and Bothell are becoming vibrant, walkable urban communities that are regional destinations. South Lake Union and Paine Field are now internationally connected employment centers. Downtown Seattle, once a focus just for jobs, is now also a fast-growing residential neighborhood. Tacoma and Bremerton are revitalizing historic downtowns and growing. Yet VISION 2050 recognizes that "business as usual" will not be enough. As a result, VISION 2050 is a call for personal and institutional action to address long-term regional challenges, including racial and social inequality, climate change, housing affordability, and imbalance of jobs and housing around the region.

During the development of VISION 2050, COVID-19 upended people's lives. While it is too soon to know the lasting impacts of COVID-19, the pandemic has amplified inequities within the region's communities. Urgent public health needs and the loss of life, severe impacts to local businesses and jobs, disruption of transit services, and the likelihood of growing evictions challenge the entire region and disproportionately affect Black and other minority communities. At the same time, communities throughout the country are wrestling with racial inequities. Nationwide protests brought into focus the systemic racism and implicit bias that threatens the health and safety of Black people across the country and world. While VISION 2050 identifies a long-term strategy for a healthy, more prosperous, and more equitable society, these recent events compound the challenges the region faces today that require immediate action and attention.

Planning for 2050

VISION 2050 provides a framework for how and where development occurs and how the region supports efforts to manage growth. The Regional Transportation Plan provides a blueprint for improving and coordinating mobility, providing transportation choices, addressing special needs, moving the region's freight, and supporting the region's economy and environment. The region has committed to unprecedented levels of investment to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. A centerpiece of the emerging transportation system is an integrated local and regional high-capacity transit network of light and heavy rail, ferries, and bus rapid transit, which supplements the roads, rail, and maritime transportation system. PSRC works to distribute over $260 million annually in federal transportation funding to cities, counties, tribes, ports, and transit agencies. The Amazing Place regional economic strategy identifies the leading drivers of the region's economy and the near-term actions for the region to sustain job growth and global competitiveness. The region has added 381,000 jobs since 2010. PSRC's economic development work is in coordination with the economic development offices for each county and local economic development efforts. In addition to developing regional plans, PSRC provides data, forecasts, research, and technical assistance to support local governments.

Washington's Growth Management Act sets the framework for regional and local planning to achieve shared goals. Local plans address land use, transportation, and environmental issues, and cities and counties plan for healthy, vibrant communities. Local investments in infrastructure and public transportation support new growth occurring in connected regional growth and employment centers, expanding access to opportunity to more residents throughout the region. Regional and local economic development plans support continued job growth to sustain a growing population.

How can we truly know what to plan for 30 years from now? While the future can be surprising, at a regional scale, population and job growth tends to follow long-range forecasts. Still, growth and change are not linear and can be disrupted by many factors. COVID-19 may slow near-term population and job growth, although it is too soon to know whether its impact will be within the range of economic cycles when viewed over the long-term. COVID-19 may have also accelerated the acceptance of remote work environments by employers. PSRC will be closely tracking data that may shape the future of the region, including, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle technology and changes to transportation, the evolution of the workplace, and economic, employment, and population changes related to COVID-19, including the inequitable impacts of the pandemic. Monitoring and responding to data will allow the region to continue to proactively plan for the future we want to see.

VISION 2050 Overview

Within this framework of state, regional, and local efforts, VISION 2050 coordinates actions across jurisdictional boundaries toward a shared vision for the future. Policies and actions in the plan work to…

Increase housing choices and affordability

Housing is a top priority among the region's residents. Despite a strong surge in housing construction, the region continues to experience a housing affordability crisis that requires coordinated efforts to expand housing options and create greater affordability. This won't be easy. Market pressures and strong employment result in rising prices and rents. The region's cities need more housing supply to catch up with demand, but even with more housing options, housing will remain unaffordable to those earning the lowest incomes. Local governments generally do not build housing but do play an important role in shaping the type, location and amount of housing available by establishing zoning, setting density limits, and providing incentives for affordability.

VISION 2050 calls for cities and counties to support the building of more diverse housing types, especially near transit, services, and jobs, to ensure all residents have the opportunity to live in thriving urban places. VISION 2050 also calls for more housing affordable to low- and very low-income households. It recognizes that providing long-term affordable housing for the region's most vulnerable residents requires public intervention through funding, collaboration, and jurisdictional action and cannot be met by market forces alone. PSRC and its partners will develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy, and PSRC will develop tools and resources to assist cities and counties with local housing efforts. Local actions will be critical for the region to make progress in addressing the lack of housing options and affordability.

Provide opportunities for all

VISION 2050 is about the people of the region. However, not all residents have benefited equally from economic success, and long-time residents have been displaced. Inequitable investments in infrastructure and economic development have resulted in some strong communities, while others are severely lacking in access to important building blocks of success.

Historic policies at the local, regional, state, and federal levels have played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Past restrictions on who was considered a citizen, who could vote, who could be involved in decision-making, who could own property, and where people could live have created disparate outcomes across every indicator for success—including health, criminal justice, education, jobs, housing, and household wealth. While discriminatory laws have been overturned, aspects of systemic racism persist and perpetuate inequitable outcomes.

VISION 2050 works to address current and past inequities, particularly among communities of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities. It works to ensure that all people have access to the resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life. Recognizing that growth will put pressure on communities, VISION 2050 also seeks to reduce the risks of displacement of lower-income people and businesses through elevating social and racial equity in regional planning and encouraging integration of equity in local plans. PSRC will collaborate with its members and community partners to develop a regional equity strategy to advance this work and create and maintain tools and resources to better understand how regional and local policies and actions can address inequities.

Sustain a strong economy

The central Puget Sound is a diverse region. VISION 2050 supports economic opportunities in all parts of the region, recognizing different strategies are appropriate to the size, scale, and character of each place. Smaller cities are often important places for commercial, retail, and community services for adjacent rural areas. Farms and forests provide resource-based jobs and valuable products for the economy. The region's metropolitan cities are the economic and cultural hubs of the four counties. Regional manufacturing/industrial centers provide important global connections and living-wage jobs for residents.

VISION 2050 calls for economic growth and opportunity that creates widespread prosperity and living-wage jobs throughout the region. Job creation in all of the region's communities, along with more housing growth in and near major job centers, will result in a better balance of jobs and housing. VISION 2050 works to increase job growth, especially in Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties, to provide greater access to employment. This growth pattern will ensure that people have the opportunity to work, live, and prosper in each community. PSRC will implement Amazing Place, the region's economic strategy, to coordinate economic development efforts, strengthen the region's communities, and support the Regional Growth Strategy.

Significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Climate change is an urgent environmental, economic, and equity threat being addressed at all levels, from the local to an international scale. The region's leaders have committed to taking actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and being a model of a more sustainable urban region.

VISION 2050 works to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of state, regional and local emissions reduction goals. VISION 2050 guides development to compact, walkable places, with greater access to mobility options, where the need for cars is reduced. Significant reductions can occur through low-carbon fuels and electrifying the region's vehicle fleet. New technologies can make transportation more efficient and enable widespread deployment of vehicle charging infrastructure. Reducing building energy use is supported through conservation, green building, and retrofitting existing buildings. Carbon is sequestered in the region's forests, farm soils, wetlands, estuaries, and urban trees.

PSRC will implement a Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conduct an analysis of regional emission reduction strategies, and engage in regional resilience planning. In addition to reducing the region's carbon footprint, VISION 2050 calls for climate resilience and adaptation and reducing impacts to vulnerable populations that are at risk of being disproportionately impacted by climate change.

Keep the region moving

People want convenient access to the jobs, amenities, schools, and open spaces that make the region a great place to live. Businesses rely on dependable access to markets, the workforce, and supply chains. VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan include a comprehensive regional transportation system that supports all modes of travel.

VISION 2050

By 2050, more than 2 million people will be connected by the high-capacity transit system, and transit ridership is expected to more than double. The region's light rail, commuter rail, fast ferry, and bus rapid transit lines will expand into one of the country's largest high-capacity transit networks, with an emphasis on connecting centers. Residents will find it easier to get around using a broader mix of transportation choices than just driving alone. VISION 2050 prioritizes transportation investments that support regional growth and manufacturing/ industrial centers and emphasizes completing regional transportation projects planned through 2040. Beyond that, the region must identify the next generation of transportation improvements to further support mobility and consider transformative technologies that will impact transportation patterns and choices.

Restore Puget Sound health

The region has made some progress restoring the health of Puget Sound, but the overall health of the Sound continues to decline. Orca and salmon populations are struggling, and some shellfish are too contaminated to eat. This not only jeopardizes the natural environment and our economy, but also our sense of place and identity as a region. Contaminated stormwater is one of the biggest threats to Puget Sound water quality. Excess nutrients, agriculture and lawn runoff, leaky septic tanks, under-treated sewage treatment plant effluent, contamination of aquifers, and low stream flows are other concerns.

VISION 2050 supports the work of the Puget Sound Partnership to promote a coordinated approach to watershed planning and restoring the health of Puget Sound. Protection of open space and restoration of existing urban lands through redevelopment and public investment are key strategies for reducing water pollution and restoring streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound. Replacing outdated infrastructure through redevelopment and retrofit projects, and building sustainably through low-impact development, will reduce environmental toxins.

Protect a network of open space

A healthy natural environment is the foundation for the region's high quality of life and thriving economy. In 2018, PSRC developed a Regional Open Space Conservation Plan that includes protection of more than 400,000 acres of the region's farms, forests, natural areas, and aquatic systems that are at risk. The plan identifies a need for 300 miles of regional trails to better connect people to the open space network and for more than 40 new park opportunities to provide equitable, walkable access to urban open space. Everyone should have access to the natural beauty of the region.

VISION 2050 directs PSRC to work with members, resource agencies, and tribes to conserve, restore, and steward the region's open space and natural environment and implement the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. The region will protect natural areas and enhance the tree canopy through regional, collaborative approaches that leverage local, county, and stakeholder actions. The Regional Growth Strategy is one of VISION 2050's most important environmental strategies, guiding growth to cities and urban areas to reduce development pressures that threaten farms, forests, and natural areas.

Grow in centers and near transit

VISION 2050 focuses greater amounts of growth within regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas. In all parts of the region, growth in more compact, walkable, transit-served locations will help reduce environmental impacts, lessen congestion, and improve health outcomes while creating vibrant, attractive neighborhoods where people can live, work, and play.

The Regional Growth Strategy has an ambitious goal of attracting 65% of population growth to the region's growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas, leveraging unprecedented investments to expand public transit throughout the region. Focusing growth in these areas provides people with greater mobility options and increases access to jobs, schools, and services. Connecting people to jobs, services and transit reduces shortens commutes, reduces pollution, and gives people more time to spend with their families. VISION 2050 requires cities to plan for regional centers, and PSRC will work with counties and cities as they set local housing and employment targets that implement the Regional Growth Strategy.

Act collaboratively and support local efforts

The central Puget Sound is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. This rapid rate of change and the intent to create a better, more welcoming, healthier region makes working collaboratively imperative. Achieving the aspirations of VISION 2050 cannot be accomplished through individual efforts alone.

Coordinated planning between cities, counties, ports and other special purpose districts, agencies, tribes, and military installations is a foundational part of VISION 2050. The plan recognizes that supporting the vision for the future requires continued investment in all of the region's communities and exploration of new funding sources and other fiscal tools to accomplish the vision.

PSRC will assist cities and counties as they update countywide policies, growth targets, and local plans. Success will require continued action at the state level, and PSRC will support legislation that can help develop and implement local and regional plans. PSRC will also monitor the implementation of VISION 2050 and use targets, performance measures, plan review, and funding to work towards successful implementation.

User Guide

VISION 2050, the long-range plan for the central Puget Sound region, fulfills requirements under Washington's Growth Management Act to develop multicounty planning policies. The policies also serve as the region's guidelines and principles required under RCW 47.80. The plan is grounded in the public's commitment to environmental sustainability, social equity, and efficient growth management that maximizes economic strength and mobility. The plan looks ahead to the year 2050, recognizing the significant growth the region expects. VISION 2050 is comprised of three parts:

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Multicounty Planning Policies
3. Implementation

Introduction and Overview – introduces the reader to the region, the vision for the future, desired outcomes, and how VISION 2050 establishes a plan to help the region grow in a more sustainable and socially equitable manner. It serves as both an introduction and a broad summary of VISION 2050.

Multicounty Planning Policies – includes the policies and actions of VISION 2050, as well as the Regional Growth Strategy.

The Regional Growth Strategy promotes a focused regional growth pattern. It builds on current growth management plans and recommits the region to directing future development into the urban growth area, while focusing new housing and jobs in cities and within a limited number of designated regional growth centers. The roles of different communities in implementing the growth strategy are described in the Regional Growth Strategy chapter. This section serves as a guide for counties and cities as they set local growth targets through their countywide processes.

The region's multicounty planning policies are adopted under the state's Growth Management Act. Multicounty planning policies are designed to achieve the Regional Growth Strategy and address regionwide issues within a collaborative framework. Multicounty planning policies are a regional commitment intended to be reflected and supported by regional, county, and local plans. The policies provide direction for more efficient use of public and private investments. Counties and cities look to multicounty planning policies to inform updates to countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plan updates. In addition to multicounty planning policies, each policy chapter contains actions that identify PSRC and local implementation items that contribute to achieving the regional vision and desired outcomes. PSRC and local jurisdictions are expected to address these actions through their planning and work programs.

Implementation – describes the programs and processes that implement VISION 2050. In addition to the topic-specific actions, this section outlines the regional programs, including:

- Data, tools, and local assistance
- Support for and review of local and regional plans
- The Regional Transportation Plan and associated project funding
- The Regional Economic Strategy
- Other regional actions, such as Regional Housing and Equity Strategies

PSRC's plan review process ensures that countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, subarea plans for regional centers, and transit agency plans are consistent with VISION 2050 and the Growth Management Act. Other regional planning efforts, such as the Regional Transportation Plan and associated funding, along with Amazing Place, the regional economic strategy, are discussed. The Implementation chapter also describes the VISION 2050 amendment process and legal framework. In addition, a glossary and a list of reference materials are available on the VISION 2050 webpage.

Together, these parts of VISION 2050 help guide the region as it experiences significant population and employment growth. VISION 2050 was developed with input from local officials, interest and advocacy groups, and residents. VISION 2050 acknowledges that jurisdictions are increasingly interdependent. Decisions made at a local level regarding land use, transportation, economic development, and the environment are inextricably linked. VISION 2050 promotes continued regional collaboration to ensure sustained success for all of the communities within the central Puget Sound region.

Multicounty Planning Policies

Multicounty planning policies provide a regional framework for addressing land use, economic development, transportation, public services, and environmental planning and serve three key roles: implement the Regional Growth Strategy, create a common planning framework for local plans, and provide the policy structure for other regional plans.

Regional Growth Strategy Implementation and Mitigation

The multicounty planning policies call for concentrating growth within the region's designated urban growth area and limiting development in natural resource and rural areas. The policies address land use, housing, urban growth area designations, target setting for population and employment, and focusing development in centers. Multicounty planning policies also serve as mitigation to offset potential negative impacts that result from growth in the region.

A Common Planning Framework

Under the Growth Management Act, multicounty planning policies have both practical and substantive effects on city and county comprehensive plans and provide a mechanism for achieving consistency among cities and counties on regional planning matters. They also guide a number of regional processes, including PSRC's local plan and policy review, the evaluation of transportation projects seeking regionally managed funds, and the development of criteria for PSRC programs and projects. These and other processes are described in more detail in the Implementation chapter.

The Growth Management Act and Multicounty Planning Policies

The Growth Management Act requires the adoption of multicounty planning policies (MPPs) for the central Puget Sound region (RCW 36.70A.210 (7)). The Growth Management Hearings Board, which is responsible for hearing and determining compliance under the Growth Management Act, has stated that "the MPPs provide for coordination and consistency among the metropolitan counties sharing common borders and related regional issues as required by RCW 36.70A.100, and, in order to ensure consistency, the directive policies of the MPPs need to have a binding effect." (Summit-Waller Community Association, et al, v Pierce County)

Countywide planning policies complement multicounty policies and provide a more specific level of detail to guide county and local comprehensive planning in each of the four counties. Both multicounty and countywide planning policies address selected issues in a consistent manner, while leaving other issues to local discretion.

Regional Planning Project Guidance

Multicounty planning policies serve as the framework for growth management, economic development, and transportation projects carried out by PSRC and others. Both the Regional Transportation Plan and Amazing Place, the regional economic strategy, are guided by the multicounty planning policies in VISION 2050.

VISION 2050 Policy Structure

The multicounty planning policies are presented in a three-part framework with a goal, policies, and actions.

Figure 3 – Regional Planning Framework

Goals

Goals speak to the desired outcomes for each of the topics covered in VISION 2050 and set the tone for the integrated approach and common framework for the regional policies. Each policy chapter begins with a goal that provides the context for the policies and actions that follow.

Policies

The multicounty planning policies provide overall guidance and direction for planning processes and decision-making at regional and local levels. Given the strong integration across the various policy sections in VISION 2050, the full body of multicounty policies is to be considered in decision-making for various programs, projects, and planning processes. The multicounty policies also serve as planning guidelines and principles required by state law to provide a common framework for regional and local planning, particularly in the area of transportation planning and its relationship to land use (RCW 47.80.026).

Actions

Actions implement the policies and outline responsibilities and tasks for PSRC, local governments, and other partners. Regional-level actions are primarily the responsibility of PSRC. Local-level actions are intended for implementation by counties, cities, and towns. Recognizing the different capacity of various municipalities to work on plan-related provisions, PSRC will make efforts to assist counties, cities, and towns in addressing these actions.

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Regional Collaboration

Goal: *The region plans collaboratively for a healthy environment, thriving communities, and opportunities for all.*

Coordinated planning across jurisdictions is a foundation of the Growth Management Act, which recognizes that cities and counties are interdependent and that systems, whether rivers or roads, span across and connect communities. VISION 2050 recognizes the necessity and opportunity for working together to achieve the region's vision for a connected region with a high quality of life and opportunities for all.

The multicounty planning policies in this chapter support coordination and collaboration among cities, counties, tribes, special purpose districts and ports, and other agencies. These policies also address cross-cutting topics that have implications for other policy chapters, such as coordination with tribal nations, recognition of the importance of major military installations, and the need to address health and equity in all of the desired plan outcomes. Lastly, this chapter also provides policy direction for setting funding priorities and addressing the fiscal needs of the region.

Countywide Coordination

The Growth Management Act establishes broad goals to act as the basis for planning at the local, countywide, and regional scales. The law requires consistency between multicounty planning policies (VISION 2050), countywide planning policies, and local comprehensive plans, while recognizing that specific aspects of implementation often occur through local actions.

Figure 4 – Washington State Planning Framework

Under the Growth Management Act, counties are required to work with their respective cities to establish growth targets and adopt countywide planning policies. To support the periodic local comprehensive plan update process, which must next be completed by 2024, countywide planning policies and targets are expected to be updated by 2021.

Equity and Health Disparities

While VISION 2050 envisions that growth and change can benefit all residents of the region, it could also exacerbate challenges currently facing historically marginalized communities. These communities include Indigenous peoples, people of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low incomes, those with disabilities and health conditions, and people with limited-English proficiency. Some of these challenges include unmet housing demand and supply, difficulty in accessing jobs and education, economic and cultural displacement, and inequitable access to opportunity for some residents. These social inequities can often lead to poor health outcomes, with historically disadvantaged communities experiencing the greatest health disparities such as shorter life spans and higher rates of chronic illnesses. Disparate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color underscore the relationship between health, race, and ethnicity. Addressing these issues will move the region closer to where being a member of a historically marginalized community does not impact or predict where someone lives, how well they do in school, their net worth, or the likelihood they will be incarcerated.

Equity

All people have the means to attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach full potential. Communities of color, historically marginalized communities, and those affected by poverty are engaged in decision-making processes, planning, and policy-making.

Inequitable life outcomes in the central Puget Sound region cannot be attributed to a single factor. A long history of anti-Black and anti-Asian racism and other forms of discrimination continue to cause disinvestment and denial of opportunity. These situations laid the groundwork for today's systemic racism that often places Black and brown lives on completely different trajectories than those of the region's white residents. Past overtly discriminatory government policies, such as redlining, and the absence of policies that attempt to rectify past practices are some of the factors contributing to present inequities and health disparities. These factors and others require many solutions, some of which may begin to be addressed through VISION 2050 or continued work by PSRC and local jurisdictions.

Coordination with Tribal Nations

The central Puget Sound region is within the traditional ancestral lands of the Coast Salish Tribes. Under treaties signed with the United States in the 1850s, many tribes in the region ceded most of the state of Washington, but in exchange reserved fishing and hunting rights including off-reservation rights to fish in all usual and accustomed fishing grounds and the right to hunt and gather on open and unclaimed lands. Federal courts have interpreted the nature and extent of those retained rights and have ruled that sovereign tribes, along with the state of Washington, have co-management responsibility and authority over fish and wildlife resources.

Each tribe has its own government with its own governing charter or constitution and set of general laws. The federal government currently recognizes nine tribal nations in the region:

- Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Puyallup Tribe of Indians

- Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe
- Snoqualmie Tribe
- Stillaguamish Indian Tribe
- Suquamish Tribe
- Tulalip Tribes

Like all governments, tribes engage in land use planning and economic development to provide jobs, housing, and services, as well as the infrastructure to support and plan for growth. As sovereign nations, tribes are not required to plan under the Growth Management Act but recognize the importance of coordination and cooperation with all governments to deal with the challenges of population growth and climate change facing the region. It is important to meaningfully consult with tribes to coordinate local land use goals and expectations. With many treaty-protected resources lost or severely impacted, protecting water quality and restoring the habitat of the Salish Sea is of shared critical significance and is possible through meaningful consultation with tribes.

PSRC recognizes and respects the full sovereignty of each tribe and their traditional lands located within the jurisdictional boundaries of PSRC members. VISION 2050 aligns with the principles of government-to-government relationships stated in the Washington Centennial Accord of 1989, and in the Washington State administrative rule (May 2019) governing prior and informed consent and consultation for any policy, plans, projects, programs, or actions that directly and tangibly affect Indian tribes' sovereignty and treaty rights. VISION 2050 supports meaningful, regular and ongoing exchange of information and opinions for better informed decision-making and mutual understanding between Indian Tribes as sovereign nations and PSRC member jurisdictions on all policies and actions that have tribal implications. Further, PSRC supports partnerships with tribes on cultural and natural resource protection, fish and wildlife habitat enhancement and restoration, economic development, and coordinated climate change adaptation and mitigation actions.

Coordination with Military Installations

Military installations are a vital part of the region, home to thousands of personnel and jobs and a major contributor to the region's economy. These bases vary in size and character, and include base services, industrial uses, airfields, ports, and natural lands. They act as large employment centers for civilians living in nearby jurisdictions and house significant numbers of enlisted personnel.

While military installations are not subject to local, regional, or state plans and regulations, PSRC recognizes the relationship between regional growth patterns and military installations, and the importance of military employment and personnel in all aspects of regional planning. Whether planning for development near military installations or considering transportation projects and programs to serve and support them, it is crucial to involve military officials in regional and local planning efforts.

Coordination with Ports

Ports play a vital role in each county in the central Puget Sound. Ports often include facilities that cannot be relocated or replicated elsewhere and are crucial to the state's economy. Port and industrial jobs often provide career paths at a range of education levels and with pay that is superior to that of typical service sector jobs. Coordinating land use and transportation planning with ports is key to maintaining these important economic functions and for the success of the region.

Funding Priorities and Fiscal Challenges

Local jurisdictions, state and county governments, transit agencies, and other service providers are consistently challenged to find the revenues necessary to maintain and operate services and facilities and to fund and develop new facilities to serve growth.

Creating and maintaining sufficient infrastructure to support the Regional Growth Strategy is critically important. This goal is shared by the jurisdictions of the region, who are responsible for transportation project and program implementation. Many of the actions described by multicounty planning policies and actions will require significant financial commitments from all levels of government to provide and maintain services and facilities.

PSRC provides local jurisdictions with access to federal transportation funds from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. Consistent with federal rules for project funding, PSRC establishes broad funding priorities in VISION 2050 policies. These policies are implemented through the funding policy framework and merit-based project competitions that provide about $260 million annually. While a significant investment in transportation infrastructure, this funding is a small part of the local, state, transit agency, and federal funding that supports transportation in the region.

The Regional Transportation Plan, adopted in 2018, identifies $200 billion in anticipated transportation investments through the year 2040. While the region has secured significant transportation funding in recent years, forecasts identify major disruptions in traditional revenue streams, including the fuel tax, due to technological advances, electrification, and inflation within the next 20 years that will require a new approach to funding transportation. Counties and cities are challenged to maintain existing facilities under current revenues. The Regional Transportation Plan contains a detailed financial strategy for meeting the region's transportation funding needs and is updated every four years as directed by federal regulations. Both the Regional Transportation Plan and the four-year Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which identifies currently funded projects, also contain a regional equity analysis.

Source: U.S. Navy (photo by Thiep Van Nguyen II, PSNS & IMF photographer)

Regional Collaboration Policies

MPP-RC-1

Coordinate planning efforts among jurisdictions, agencies, federally recognized tribes, ports, and adjacent regions, where there are common borders or related regional issues, to facilitate a common vision.

MPP-RC-2

Prioritize services and access to opportunity for people of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities to ensure all people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve quality of life and address past inequities.

MPP-RC-3

Make reduction of health disparities and improvement of health outcomes across the region a priority when developing and carrying out regional, countywide, and local plans.

MPP-RC-4

Coordinate with tribes in regional and local planning, recognizing the mutual benefits and potential for impacts between growth occurring within and outside tribal boundaries.

MPP-RC-5

Consult with military installations in regional and local planning, recognizing the mutual benefits and potential for impacts between growth occurring within and outside installation boundaries.

MPP-RC-6

Recognize the beneficial impacts of military installations as well as the land use, housing, and transportation challenges for adjacent and nearby communities.

MPP-RC-7

Give funding priority – both for transportation infrastructure and for economic development – to support designated regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers, consistent with the regional vision. Regional funds are prioritized to regional centers.

MPP-RC-8

Direct subregional funding, especially county-level and local funds, to countywide centers, high-capacity transit areas with a station area plan, and other local centers. County-level and local funding are also appropriate to prioritize to regional centers.

MPP-RC-9

Recognize and give regional funding priority to transportation facilities, infrastructure, and services that explicitly advance the development of housing in designated regional growth centers. Give additional priority to projects and services that advance and support new and existing affordable housing that includes low- and very low-income residents.

VISION 2050

MPP-RC-10

Identify and develop changes to regulatory, pricing, taxing, and expenditure practices, and other fiscal tools within the region to implement the vision.

MPP-RC-11

Explore new and existing sources of funding for services and infrastructure, recognizing that such funding is vital if local governments are to achieve the regional vision.

MPP-RC-12

Support local and regional efforts to develop state legislation to provide new fiscal tools to support local and regional planning and to support infrastructure improvements and services.

MPP-RC-13

Update countywide planning policies, where necessary, prior to December 31, 2021, to address the multicounty planning policies in VISION 2050.

MPP-RC-14

Monitor implementation of VISION 2050 to evaluate progress in achieving the Regional Growth Strategy, as well as the regional collaboration, environment, climate change, development patterns, housing, economy, transportation, and public services provisions.

MPP-RC-15

Promote regional and national efforts to restore Puget Sound and its watersheds, in coordination with cities, counties, federally recognized tribes, federal and state agencies, utilities, and other partners.

Regional Collaboration Actions

Regional Actions

RC-Action-1

Plan Updates: PSRC will support efforts to update countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, and infrastructure and utility plans, including providing updated plan review and certification guidance.

RC-Action-2

Monitoring Program: PSRC will track the implementation of VISION 2050 through monitoring and periodic evaluation.

RC-Action-3

Regional Equity Strategy: PSRC, in coordination with member governments and community stakeholders, will develop and implement a regional equity strategy intended to make equity central to PSRC's work and to support the 2024 local comprehensive plan updates. The strategy could include components such as:

- Creating and maintaining tools and resources, including data and outreach, to better understand how regional and local policies and actions affect our region's residents, specifically as they relate to people of color and people with low incomes.

- Developing strategies and best practices for centering equity in regional and local planning work, including inclusive community engagement, monitoring, and actions to achieve equitable development outcomes and mitigate displacement of vulnerable communities.

- Identifying implementation steps, including how to measure outcomes.

- Identifying mechanisms to prioritize access to funding to address inequities.

- Developing a plan and committing resources for an equity advisory group that can help provide feedback on and help implement the Regional Equity Strategy.

- Developing and adopting an equity impact tool for evaluating PSRC decisions and community engagement.

RC-Action-4

Outreach: PSRC will develop an outreach program for VISION 2050 that is designed to communicate the goals and policies of VISION 2050 to member jurisdictions, regional stakeholders, the business community, and the public. This work program will have the following objectives:

- Build awareness of VISION 2050 among local jurisdictions in advance of the development of local comprehensive plans.

- Raise awareness of PSRC and the desired outcomes of VISION 2050 to residents across the region.

- Collaborate with residents who are historically underrepresented in the planning process to ensure all voices are heard in regional planning.

RC-Action-5

Project Selection Criteria: Incorporate criteria into regional infrastructure evaluation processes that would allow for the inclusion and funding of transportation projects, identified in a completed local or regional transportation study, that relate to and potentially benefit access to military installations and surrounding jurisdictions. Funding for such projects will be consistent with the goals and policies of VISION 2050, including support for regional centers and progress toward greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets.

RC-Action-6

Project Support for Puget Sound Recovery: PSRC will develop a methodology within the regional transportation funding process that would support projects that contribute to the recovery of the health of Puget Sound and its watersheds.

Regional and Local Actions

RC-Action-7

Funding Sources: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will investigate existing and new funding sources for infrastructure, services, economic development, military-community compatibility, natural resource planning, and open space, to assist local governments with the implementation of VISION 2050. Explore options to develop incentives and innovative funding mechanisms, particularly in centers and transit station areas. Provide technical assistance to help local jurisdictions use existing and new funding sources.

RC-Action-8

Communicate VISION 2050 to State Agencies and the Legislature: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will relay the goals and objectives of VISION 2050 to state agencies and the Legislature, in order to promote changes in state law and funding to best advance VISION 2050.

RC-Action-9

Fiscal Sustainability: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will advocate to the state Legislature about the needs for counties (including unincorporated areas), cities, and other public agencies and service providers to remain fiscally sustainable and the fiscal challenges facing local governments, public agencies and service providers related to accommodating growth, maintaining aging infrastructure, and the annexation of urban areas.

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Regional Growth Strategy

Goal: *The region accommodates growth in urban areas, focused in designated centers and near transit stations, to create healthy, equitable, vibrant communities well-served by infrastructure and services. Rural and resource lands continue to be vital parts of the region that retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities over the long term.*

VISION 2050 is a shared strategy for how and where the central Puget Sound region can grow to a forecast of 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs by the year 2050. The Regional Growth Strategy considers how the region can distribute the forecasted growth, primarily within the designated urban growth area, and support development near high-capacity transit in the region. The strategy is a description of a preferred pattern of urban growth that has been designed to minimize environmental impacts, support economic prosperity, advance social equity, promote affordable housing choices, improve mobility, and make efficient use of new and existing infrastructure.

VISION 2050 envisions a future where the region:

- Maintains a stable urban growth area.
- Focuses the great majority of new population and employment within the urban growth area.
- Maintains a variety of community types, densities, and sizes.
- Achieves a better balance of jobs and housing across the region.
- Within the urban growth area, focuses growth in cities.
- Within cities, creates and supports centers to serve as concentrations of jobs, housing, services, and other activities.
- Builds transit-oriented development around existing and planned infrastructure.
- Uses existing infrastructure and new investments efficiently.

Under the Growth Management Act, counties, in consultation with cities, are responsible for adopting population and employment growth targets to ensure that each county collectively is accommodating projected population and employment. These population and employment growth targets are a key input to local comprehensive plans. Jurisdictions use growth targets to inform planning for land use, transportation, and capital facilities. The Regional Growth Strategy provides a regional framework for the countywide growth target process by defining expectations for different types of places. It will be critical for cities across the region to work together and with the public to plan for new growth, particularly near major transit hubs.

A Framework for Growth

The Growth Management Act identifies three distinct landscapes: urban lands, rural lands, and natural resource lands. The Act makes clear that the long-term sustainability of rural and resource lands is dependent on accommodating development within the designated urban growth area. The designation of the urban growth area also helps channel investments in infrastructure within already built-up areas—especially cities.

How and where growth happens within the urban growth area has differing impacts on regional mobility, environmental outcomes, and community development. In response to the central challenge of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, VISION 2050 builds on the state Growth Management Act framework and the regional emphasis of focusing growth into centers and near high-capacity transit options to create more sustainable communities and reduce emissions. Compared to past trends, the strategy encourages more population and employment growth in the largest and most transit-served communities in the region. Environmental review for VISION 2050 showed that, compared with a range of alternatives, this growth pattern would have significant benefits for mobility, air quality, environmental stewardship, and healthy communities.

The region's varied rural areas offer a diverse set of natural amenities. Common features include small-scale farms, wooded areas, lakes and streams, and open spaces. Technically, rural lands are those areas that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential patterns that preserve rural character. The strategy encourages lower rates of growth in rural areas and in outlying communities to preserve rural landscapes and reduce long car trips.

Most of the region's total land area is designated as natural resource lands, state lands, or federal lands. These areas include agricultural lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products, forest lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber, and mineral lands that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals. The vast majority of this land falls under the forest lands designation, and much of this is protected under federal, state, and local regulations.

Both Major Military Installations and Tribal Lands are recognized in the Regional Growth Strategy because of their unique importance to the region. However, neither type of place is allocated forecasted growth in the strategy because both plan outside of the Growth Management Act. Military installations are governed by the federal government and tribal lands are sovereign Native American nations.

Urban Growth Area

Counties must work with their cities to designate an urban growth area as the primary location for growth and future development. All four counties in the region designated an urban growth area in the mid-1990s. Subsequently, only relatively minor adjustments to the urban growth area have been made. The Regional Growth Strategy was developed with the assumption that, with good planning and efficient land use, existing urban growth area designations can accommodate the population and employment growth expected by 2050. VISION 2050 calls for a stable and sustainable urban growth area into the future, thus any adjustments to the urban growth area in the coming decades should continue to be minor. When adjustments to the urban growth area are considered, it will be important to avoid encroaching on important habitat and natural resource areas. The Growth Management Act, countywide planning policies, and county comprehensive plans include requirements and procedures to amend the urban growth area.

Focusing Growth Near Transit and in Centers

Regional Centers

The emphasis on the development of centers throughout the region is at the heart of VISION 2050's approach to growth management. Regional growth centers are locations characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development, with a mix of office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses. Regional growth centers are envisioned as major focal points of higher-density population and employment, served with efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure and services. Jurisdictions with regional growth centers have worked to accommodate new growth, and centers have been successful in adding new housing and jobs. The Regional Centers Framework establishes two types of regional growth centers—metro growth centers and urban growth centers— and sets criteria and growth expectations for them. Metro growth centers are the densest and most connected places in the region and are expected to accommodate higher levels of growth.

Mixed-use centers of different sizes and scales—including large designated regional growth centers, countywide centers, local downtowns, and other local centers—are envisioned for all of the region's cities. Concentrating growth in mixed-use centers of different scales allows cities and other urban service providers to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, make more efficient and less costly investments in new infrastructure, and minimize the environmental impacts of urban growth.

The region also contains manufacturing/industrial centers. These are existing employment areas with intensive, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses that cannot be easily mixed with other activities. Manufacturing/industrial centers are intended to continue to accommodate a significant amount of regional employment. The Regional Centers Framework establishes two types of regional manufacturing/industrial centers—industrial employment centers and industrial growth centers—and establishes different criteria and growth expectations for these centers. Unlike regional growth centers, these areas are not appropriate for residential growth.

Access to High-Capacity Transit

The central Puget Sound region is investing heavily in its high-capacity transit system and greatly expanding light rail, bus rapid transit, and passenger ferry service. Since the initial Regional Growth Strategy in VISION 2040 was adopted, the region's voters approved two major Sound Transit ballot measures, and other transit agencies have significantly expanded planning for high-capacity transit. VISION 2050 incorporates a renewed focus on locating growth near current and future high-capacity transit facilities. Rail, ferry, and bus rapid transit station areas are ideal for increased density, new residences, and businesses—referred to as transit-oriented development. Allowing for greater employment and population growth within walking distance to high-capacity transit promotes the use of the region's transit systems and reduces the number of trips that require a personal vehicle. Transit-oriented development near stations located in or near manufacturing/industrial centers needs to function differently with different uses than other centers to maintain a focus on protecting industrial zoning, jobs, and the region's overall economic vitality. VISION 2050 includes a goal for 65% of the region's population growth and 75% of the region's employment growth to be located in regional growth centers and within walking distance of high-capacity transit. This regional-scale goal provides a benchmark to inform local planning and continue to focus new growth as transit investments come into service. This goal also helps to measure regional progress, while providing flexibility for individual station areas.

Housing, Displacement, and Jobs-Housing Balance

Planning for a balanced distribution of affordable housing choices and jobs is critical to the success of the Regional Growth Strategy. Skyrocketing housing prices have displaced residents, particularly in major cities and near job centers. The displacement risk mapping discussed in the Development Patterns section identifies areas most at risk of cultural, economic, and physical displacement. VISION 2050 calls for jurisdictions to understand and to mitigate displacement for both people and businesses to the extent feasible. Collectively, cities and counties must plan for a wider variety of housing types and densities, particularly moderate density housing, to ensure the region can accommodate new growth while minimizing displacement of existing residents.

Uneven economic prosperity has also contributed to long commutes and the need for auto trips to retail and services. The Regional Growth Strategy encourages shifting expected employment growth from King County to Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Jobs-housing balance compares the relative amount of housing and employment in an area, with an aim toward reducing long commute trips. Across the region, the strategy plans for improved jobs-housing balance in most counties and subareas compared to today. Access to living wage jobs outside King County and access to affordable housing in and near job centers within King County are important for regional mobility, environmental outcomes, and community development.

Distributing Growth Using Regional Geographies

The Regional Growth Strategy is a cornerstone of VISION 2050, providing specific numeric shares to achieve a development pattern with fewer environmental impacts and a more compact urban form. VISION 2050 provides a framework for the distribution of growth to regional geographies. Geographies are defined by the idea that different types of cities and unincorporated areas will play distinct roles in the region's future based on regional centers, access to high-capacity transit, and future planning.

High-capacity transit includes existing or planned light rail, commuter rail, ferry, streetcar, and bus rapid transit.

Cities, towns, and neighborhoods of various sizes and character will continue to offer a wide choice of living options. The region's centers framework fits within the regional geographies framework, with centers of different sizes and scales envisioned for all cities.

In the Regional Growth Strategy, the region's landscape has been divided into nine types of geographies based on their size, function, and access to high-capacity transit:

- **Metropolitan Cities** (5 cities) and **Core Cities** (16 cities, including unincorporated Silverdale) include cities that have designated regional growth centers. Most are also connected to the region's high-capacity transit system. These two groups of cities are and will be the most intensely urban places in the region.

- **High Capacity Transit Communities** (34 cities and unincorporated communities) are cities and unincorporated areas that are connected to regional high-capacity transit system. These urban unincorporated areas are also planned for annexation or incorporation.

- **Cities and Towns** (42 cities) are cities and towns with smaller downtown and local centers, which may be served by local transit.

- **Urban Unincorporated Areas** capture a wide variety of urban lands, both lightly and heavily developed. These areas may be served by local transit and may include areas identified as potential annexation or incorporation areas.

- **Rural Areas** and **Natural Resources Lands** describe the different types of unincorporated areas outside the urban growth area and include very low-density housing, working landscapes, and open space.

- **Major Military Installations** serve as hubs for both military and civilian employment and population.

- **Indian Reservation Lands** are permanent homelands of sovereign tribal nations designated through treaty, Executive, or Congressional Acts and are the home of the region's native cultures and traditions. Tribes also retain interests and ownership of off-reservation land.

These regional geographies provide a flexible framework to distribute the region's forecast growth to groups of places and allow for greater specificity than simply relying on county boundaries. (However, in some instances, an individual jurisdiction may stand alone within a regional geography category.) This framework provides clearer regional expectations about the roles of different types of cities and unincorporated areas in accommodating regional growth.

The Regional Growth Strategy by the Numbers

The Regional Growth Strategy is comprised of two parts. First is a growth concept that builds on the foundation provided in the Growth Management Act, emphasizing the role of the urban growth area, regional growth centers, and areas with access to high-capacity transit in accommodating future population and employment. The second part—the numeric growth allocations by regional geographies—contains specific shares to distribute forecast growth. The regional geographies framework calls for focusing growth into different categories of cities and urban unincorporated areas and recognizes the roles of the region's counties in accommodating population and employment growth.

The Regional Growth Strategy is intended to coordinate growth among the region's cities and towns as they periodically update local housing and employment growth targets and amend their local comprehensive plans. Countywide growth targets are based on population forecasts developed by the state Office of Financial Management and regional employment forecasts from PSRC.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for different regional geographies to accommodate different shares of population and employment growth—within the region as a whole, as well as within each county. While relative amounts may differ somewhat between counties, the roles of regional geographies within each county are consistent for the region as a whole. Within each county, the relative distribution of growth to individual cities and unincorporated places will be determined through countywide target-setting, taking into account local circumstances.

The primary emphasis of the Regional Growth Strategy is on the shares of growth among regional geographies. The Regional Growth Strategy was developed using the PSRC macroeconomic forecasts for the year 2050 and Office of Financial Management assumptions about the relative shares of growth to each county.

The regional model and forecasts focus on long-term projections, using trend data to predict how many people and jobs the region can expect to add over the next 30 years. The regional macroeconomic forecast is a "big picture" long-range forecast of jobs, population, and households at the regional scale. Since business cycle upturns and downturns are included in that trend data, the forecasts are consistent with historical periods of stronger growth alternating with slowdowns over time.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic may have far-reaching effects that are unknown today and are different from the effects of a typical economic cycle. PSRC's next regional forecast will include the best data available, including impacts from COVID-19 as captured in measures such as job totals and unemployment. As more data on the impacts from COVID-19 becomes available, PSRC will share findings showing the changes in key transportation, employment, workplace, and population trends.

Recognizing the potential of change to these regional forecasts, it is more useful to consider the share or percentages of regional and county growth in the tables that follow than the individual growth amounts.

Figure 5 – Regional Geographies

Regional Geographies
- Metropolitan Cities
- Core Cities
- HCT Communities
- Cities & Towns
- Urban Unincorporated Areas
- Rural
- Agricultural Land
- Natural Resource Land
- Indian Reservation Land
- Military Installations
- Urban Growth Area
- Regional Growth Center
- Manufacturing Industrial Center

Figure 6 – Population Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2017-50

	Metropolitan Cities	Core Cities	High Capacity Transit Communities	Cities & Towns	Urban Unincorporated	Rural	Total
Snohomish	20% · 87,000	12% · 50,000	50% · 210,000	9.5% · 40,500	4% · 18,000	4.5% · 18,500	24% · 424,000
Pierce	38% · 137,000	23% · 85,000	21% · 77,000	7% · 25,000	8% · 29,000	3% · 11,000	21% · 364,000
Kitsap	34% · 33,000	16% · 15,000	36% · 34,000	0% · 0	6% · 6,000	8% · 8,000	5% · 97,000
King	44% · 381,000	40% · 346,000	11% · 92,000	5% · 44,000	0% · 4,000	1% · 6,000	50% · 872,000
TOTAL GROWTH	36% · 637,000	28% · 496,000	24% · 413,000	6% · 109,000	3% · 57,000	2% · 43,000	100% · 1,756,000
2017 BASE	1,222,000	921,000	878,000	338,000	172,000	536,000	4,067,000

*May not sum accurately due to rounding. Snohomish County Cities & Towns and Rural figures are rounded to the nearest half percent and 500 population. Other figures are rounded to the nearest whole percentage and 1000 population.

Figure 7 – Employment Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2017-50

	Metropolitan Cities	Core Cities	High Capacity Transit Communities	Cities & Towns	Urban Unincorporated	Rural	Total
Snohomish	39% · 89,000	17% · 39,000	30% · 68,000	8% · 18,000	3% · 7,000	2% · 4,000	19% · 225,000
Pierce	48% · 94,000	23% · 44,000	15% · 29,000	6% · 13,000	6% · 12,000	2% · 3,000	17% · 195,000
Kitsap	35% · 20,000	26% · 15,000	32% · 18,000	0% · 0	2% · 1,000	5% · 3,000	5% · 57,000
King	46% · 311,000	45% · 310,000	6% · 40,000	3% · 18,000	0% · 1,000	0% · 3,000	59% · 682,000
TOTAL GROWTH	44% · 514,000	35% · 407,000	13% · 155,000	4% · 49,000	2% · 21,000	1% · 13,000	100% · 1,158,000
2017 BASE	1,047,000	642,000	269,000	100,000	81,000	95,000	2,233,000

Metropolitan Cities

Each of the four counties in the region contains at least one central city that has convenient access to high-capacity transit and serves as a civic, cultural, and economic hub. At least one regional growth center has been designated within each of these Metropolitan Cities to serve as a focal point for accommodating both population and employment growth.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the five Metropolitan Cities to accommodate 36% of regional population growth and 44% of regional employment growth by the year 2050. It would be consistent with the spirit of the Regional Growth Strategy for the region's Metropolitan Cities to accommodate an even larger share of forecast regional growth in the countywide growth targets, while aiming for a better balance of jobs and housing. Within Metropolitan Cities, jurisdictions should encourage growth near high-capacity transit and within regional growth centers to achieve regional growth goals.

Figure 8 – Metropolitan Cities

Metropolitan Cities (5 cities, 230 square miles): Bellevue, Bremerton & Bremerton Urban Growth Area (UGA), Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma

Metropolitan Cities in King and Pierce counties are expected to accommodate larger shares of their respective counties' growth than those in Kitsap and Snohomish counties.

Core Cities

The region contains other major cities called Core Cities with designated regional growth centers intended to accommodate a significant share of future growth. These 16 cities (including the unincorporated community of Silverdale) contain key hubs for the region's long-range multimodal transportation system and are major civic, cultural, and employment centers within their counties. The Regional Growth Strategy envisions a major role for these cities in accommodating growth while providing a significant share of the region's housing.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the 16 Core Cities to accommodate 28% of the region's population growth and 35% of its employment growth by the year 2050. Within Core Cities, jurisdictions should encourage growth near high-capacity transit stations and within regional growth centers to achieve regional growth goals.

Figure 9 – Core Cities

City of Redmond

Core Cities (16 cities including Silverdale, 255 square miles): Auburn, Bothell, Burien, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Lakewood, Lynnwood, Puyallup, Redmond, Renton, SeaTac, Silverdale, Tukwila, and University Place

King County's Core Cities are expected to accommodate a much larger share of King County's growth than Core Cities in Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

High Capacity Transit Communities

High Capacity Transit Communities include cities connected to existing or planned light rail, commuter rail, ferry, streetcar, and bus rapid transit facilities. High Capacity Transit Communities also includes urban unincorporated areas planned for annexation or incorporation and with existing or planned access to high-capacity transit. As the region's transit system grows, these 34 communities play an increasingly important role as hubs to accommodate regional employment and population growth. Targeting growth within these transit-rich communities helps to support mobility and reduces the number and length of vehicle trips.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the 34 High Capacity Transit Communities to accommodate 24% of the region's population growth and 13% of its employment growth by the year 2050.

Figure 10 – High Capacity Transit Communities

High Capacity Transit Communities (34 total, 274 square miles): Arlington, Bainbridge Island, Bothell Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA), Des Moines, DuPont, Edmonds, Edmonds MUGA, Everett MUGA, Federal Way Potential Annexation Area (PAA), Fife, Fircrest, Kenmore, Kingston, Lake Forest Park, Larch Way Overlap, Lynnwood MUGA, Marysville, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Mill Creek MUGA, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Mukilteo MUGA, Newcastle, North Highline (Seattle PAA), Renton PAA, Parkland-Spanaway-Midland PAA, Pierce Mid-County (part), Port Orchard & Port Orchard UGA, Poulsbo & Poulsbo UGA, Shoreline, South Hill Planned Incorporation Area (PIA), Sumner, and Woodinville

High Capacity Transit Communities in Kitsap and Snohomish counties are expected to accommodate a much larger share of their county growth than High Capacity Transit Communities in King and Pierce counties.

Cities and Towns

Cities and Towns include a diverse array of jurisdictions, including places near major cities, small residential towns, and free-standing cities and towns surrounded by rural and resource lands. Cities and Towns provide important housing, jobs, commerce, and services in their downtowns and local centers. The region's 42 Cities and Towns are expected to accommodate relatively less growth than historical trends and remain relatively stable for the long term. Many Cities and Towns are served by local transit options, but these jurisdictions are not connected to the regional high-capacity transit system. Some may not be served by scheduled fixed-route transit or be within a transit service district. Their locally-designated city or town centers provide local job, service, cultural, and housing areas for their communities. These local centers should be identified in local comprehensive plans and become priority areas for future investments and growth at the local level.

Cities inside the contiguous urban growth area will likely be able to accommodate a larger share of growth due to their proximity to the region's large cities, existing and planned transportation systems, and other supporting infrastructure. Small residential towns that have limited potential for accommodating growth are likely to receive a lesser share of cities and towns growth.

Free-standing cities and towns are separated from the contiguous urban growth area and should serve as hubs for relatively higher-density housing choices and as job and service centers for surrounding rural areas. These cities should be the focal points of rural-based industries and commerce and the location of schools and other institutions serving rural populations. Due to their physical isolation from the rest of the designated urban growth area, they will likely receive a lesser overall share of growth and are not expected to grow as much as cities and towns in the contiguous urban growth area.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for 42 Cities and Towns to accommodate 6% of the region's population growth and 4% of its employment growth by the year 2050.

Figure 11 – Cities and Towns

Cities and Towns (42 cities, 140 square miles): Algona, Beaux Arts, Black Diamond, Bonney Lake, Brier, Buckley, Carbonado, Carnation, Clyde Hill, Covington, Darrington, Duvall, Eatonville, Edgewood, Enumclaw, Gig Harbor, Gold Bar, Granite Falls, Hunts Point, Index, Lake Stevens, Maple Valley, Medina, Milton, Monroe, Normandy Park, North Bend, Orting, Pacific, Roy, Ruston, Sammamish, Skykomish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, South Prairie, Stanwood, Steilacoom, Sultan, Wilkeson, Woodway, and Yarrow Point

Cities and Towns are located throughout the region and represent over half of the region's incorporated jurisdictions. Cities and Towns in Snohomish and Pierce counties are expected to accommodate a relatively higher share of their countywide growth compared to King and Kitsap counties.

Urban Unincorporated Areas

Urban Unincorporated Areas are areas within the urban growth area and governed by the county. Urban Unincorporated Areas are quite diverse, with both lightly developed outlying areas and neighborhoods that are much more urban and indistinguishable from surrounding incorporated jurisdictions. Urban Unincorporated Areas may be served by local transit but are either not yet planned for annexation or incorporation and/or not yet planned for high-capacity transit. Urban unincorporated areas that are planned for annexation and served by high-capacity transit are categorized in the High Capacity Transit Communities regional geography.

County buildable lands analyses suggest that urban unincorporated areas have the potential to accommodate significant growth for the long term, and that there will be little need to expand the designated urban growth area or development capacity. The process for adjusting the urban growth area is provided in the Growth Management Act.

VISION 2050 envisions that over time the unincorporated area inside the urban growth area will be fully annexed to or incorporated as cities. Careful planning and phased development of the unincorporated portions of the urban growth area are vital to ensure that these areas assume appropriate urban densities and an urban form that supports the efficient provision of future transit and urban services and facilitates annexation or incorporation. Planning and permitting that is well-coordinated between the counties and adjacent cities will be key to managing the growth of these areas.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area to accommodate 3% of the region's population growth and 2% of the employment growth by the year 2050.

Figure 12 – Urban Unincorporated Areas

Pierce County

Urban Unincorporated Areas (104 square miles) All four counties have designated urban unincorporated areas, many of which are affiliated for annexation with incorporated cities and towns.

The unincorporated urban growth areas in Pierce and Kitsap counties have the highest share of anticipated county population and employment growth, followed by King and Snohomish counties.

Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands

In addition to its focus on urban areas, the Regional Growth Strategy follows Growth Management Act guidance in supporting the long-term use of rural and designated natural resource lands for farming and forestry, recreation, cottage industries, mining, and limited low-density housing supported by rural levels of service. Incorporated cities and towns that are surrounded by or adjacent to rural and resource areas should provide the majority of services and jobs for rural residents, as well as more concentrated and varied housing options. The Regional Growth Strategy includes shares of residential growth in rural areas. It encourages use of tools to reduce the amount of development in rural and resource lands, such as transfer of development rights into urban areas, and seeks to ensure that proposed levels of development are consistent with the character of rural and resource areas.

Rural Areas

Rural Areas are expected to retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities in the region over the long term. They are not intended to be served with urban services or accommodate a significant amount of residential or employment growth. VISION 2050 calls for reduced rural population growth rates in all counties. Counties are encouraged to plan for even lower growth—where possible—than contained in the Regional Growth Strategy.

Figure 13 – Rural Areas

Rural Areas (1,494 square miles): All four counties have designated rural areas, which represents 24% of the region's land area.

Natural Resource Lands

Lands designated as agriculture, forest, and mineral areas are grouped together as Natural Resource Lands. Resource lands will be permanently protected from incompatible residential and employment growth to safeguard them as important economic, cultural, and environmental assets, and to protect the long-term viability of resource-based industries. Even small amounts of residential growth in these areas can seriously interfere with productive natural resource harvest and processing. Fragmentation of large, contiguous acreages through subdivision is also of particular concern. These areas will not accommodate significant future growth, and the Regional Growth Strategy does not distribute population or employment to them. This regional geography includes federal and state protected lands, which, in some cases, may not be formally designated as resource lands by counties under the Growth Management Act.

Figure 14 – Natural Resource Lands

Natural Resource Lands (3,829 square miles): Natural resource lands, representing 61% of the region's land area.

Other Planning Areas

While local governments plan under the Growth Management Act and establish countywide growth targets, there are other areas in the region that are not subject to the state and regional planning framework. Military installations are home to enlisted personnel and civilian jobs but are subject to federal planning requirements. Federally-recognized Indian reservations, as well as off-reservation lands held in trust for tribes and tribal members, are permanent homelands of sovereign tribal nations designated through treaty, Executive, or Congressional Acts, and are home to many people and jobs. These areas plan differently than local governments, but VISION 2050 recognizes their important roles in the region and their influence on regional growth patterns.

Major Military Installations

Military installations play an important role in the central Puget Sound region's economy. Washington state has one of the highest concentrations of military personnel claiming residence, with the majority of personnel located at installations in the central Puget Sound region. Nine installations of various sizes are located in the region. Military employment greatly benefits the region's economy and generates billions of dollars in economic impact.

Military bases vary greatly in size, population density and character and often integrate industrial uses, commercial and service uses, and residential development. Installations are not required to plan under the Growth Management Act, and the Regional Growth Strategy does not allocate forecasted regional growth to these areas, though existing levels of military employment are included in regional modeling. However, installations serve as hubs for both employment and population, and it is important to work together on growth planning in and around bases. PSRC recognizes the relationship between regional growth patterns and the importance of military employment and personnel in all aspects of regional planning. Major Military Installations are recognized as a regional geography.

Military readiness can be severely impacted by growth and general congestion near bases, and access is important to maintain for installations and surrounding communities. Washington State, the Department of Defense, the South Sound Military and Communities Partnership, local governments, and others continue to work on land use compatibility, coordination, and access to and from bases.

Major Military Installations are defined by PSRC as installations with more than 5,000 active duty and civilian personnel. This regional geography is designed to promote coordination between the military installation, countywide planning efforts, and neighboring jurisdictions to plan for growth, address regional impacts and enhance multimodal transportation options. Military installations are major employers, associated with transportation congestion and housing and school capacity demand, and regional recognition can help understand and alleviate impacts. Per the Regional Centers Framework, regional expectations for Major Military Installations include:

- Ongoing coordination between the military installation, countywide planning forum, and neighboring jurisdictions regarding planned growth, regional impacts, and implementation of multimodal transportation options.
- Support for multimodal commute planning and mode split goals for the installation.
- Completed Joint Land Use Study or similar coordinated planning effort.

Figure 15 – Major Military Installations

Naval Base Kitsap

Naval Base Kitsap

Major Military Installations (4 installations, 122 square miles): Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, and Naval Station Everett

There are five smaller installations in the region: Naval Base Kitsap Keyport, Seattle Coast Guard Station, Naval Base Kitsap Jackson Park, Camp Murray, and Naval Base Everett – Smokey Point Support Complex.

Indian Reservation Lands

The central Puget Sound region is home to nine sovereign nations recognized by the United States government: the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Port Gamble S'klallam Tribe, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Stillaguamish Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, the Tulalip Tribes, and the Nisqually Tribe.

PSRC acknowledges the importance of the Coast Salish peoples and lands to the region. Indian reservation lands are reserved homelands that are subject to the jurisdiction of each tribal government and have immense value as the home of the region's native cultures and traditions. Some Indian reservation lands have also emerged as significant concentrations of jobs, schools, cultural centers, and other activities. Quil Ceda Village, for example, is one of only two federal municipalities in the country, and the Tulalip Tribes is one of the largest employers in Snohomish County.

Characteristics of Indian reservation lands vary widely across the region. Tribal lands can include very large areas, with population and employment activity varying from dispersed to dense. While some are rural or forested, others have concentrated residential and employment uses. Tribal land use can be complex, as tribal governments own land outside of reservations, and some reservation land is under fee-simple private ownership and covered under other regional geographies. Tribal lands are held in fee by tribes and in federal trust status for tribes and serve as part of the reservation land base, usual and accustomed stations for treaty rights, and culturally significant sites for tribal nations. In certain circumstances, reservations have overlapping land use jurisdiction with local governments. Close coordination between tribes and local governments is important to avoid land use conflicts. In addition, tribes retain interests in off-reservation lands that were ceded in treaties. These interests include water rights, access to natural resources, and cultural resources protection.

Most tribal governments complete comprehensive plans for reservation lands and natural resources to provide guidance for development of tribal owned and fee-simple lands. Counties and cities should coordinate with tribal nations on growth planning issues, including how much growth tribal nations are forecasting and tracking on reservations in order to coordinate their planning policies and achieve consistency in regional planning.

Growth on rural reservation lands is not included in rural regional geography allocations when tracking population and employment growth. Counties should seek to be consistent with the overall goals for rural growth in VISION 2050 when permitting new development on fee-simple reservation lands outside the urban growth area.

As sovereign nations, each tribe has its own form of government, constitution or charter, laws and planning processes and are not subject to state planning requirements or the Growth Management Act. Because of this, the Regional Growth Strategy does not include population and employment growth allocations for these sovereign lands. Tribes engage in comprehensive planning similar to other jurisdictions with regular updates addressing elements such as land use, transportation, housing, and utilities. Many tribes have adopted a "seven generation" concept of planning to evaluate whether decisions will benefit generations far into the future. Tribes help to shape regional policy by participating as members of PSRC.

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Figure 16 – Indian Reservation Lands

Quil Ceda Village

Indian Reservation Lands (9 reservations, 93 square miles): Muckleshoot Indian Reservation, Nisqually Indian Reservation, Port Gamble Indian Reservation, Port Madison Reservation (Suquamish Tribe), Puyallup Indian Reservation, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Reservation, Snoqualmie Indian Reservation, Stillaguamish Indian Reservation, and Tulalip Indian Reservation

Guidance for Aligning Growth Targets

Prior to the next cycle of local comprehensive plan updates, counties and cities will work together to establish growth targets for each jurisdiction to accommodate projected growth. These targets set by countywide planning bodies support implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy and VISION 2050 objectives of housing production, better jobs-housing balance, and greater growth near the region's transit investments. This section provides guidance on regional review of growth target allocations in countywide planning policies and comprehensive plan certification.

- PSRC, in consultation with its members, will update its guidance and Plan Review Manual and provide technical assistance to counties and cities as they develop countywide growth targets and prepare comprehensive plan updates. Guidance will address housing, regional centers, goals for transit-oriented development, support for jobs-housing balance, and other aspects of VISION 2050. PSRC's guidance will recognize that different approaches may be appropriate based on local circumstances. PSRC will provide early information and outreach to local governments on plan review and certification, including land use growth assumptions in comprehensive plans.

- PSRC will review countywide adoption of growth targets with recognition of good faith efforts to be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and VISION 2050 over the long-term. Targets should demonstrate how cities and counties are working towards the outcomes and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy. In some cases, countywide growth targets may not fully align with the precise shares in the Regional Growth Strategy. For example, there are jurisdictions where high-capacity transit is planned to be built and operational late in the planning period, and higher growth rates may not occur until the last decades of this plan.

- As local comprehensive plans are updated, land use growth assumptions used in plans should be consistent with adopted countywide growth targets and support implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy. Capacity is the amount of housing and jobs that could be allowed under adopted zoning. The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities, at a minimum, to provide capacity to accommodate 20-year projected growth targets. Capacity may be greater than land use growth assumptions used in comprehensive plans.

- In its review of comprehensive plans for certification, PSRC looks for substantial consistency of the plan's land use growth assumptions with adopted countywide growth targets. In addition to assessing that the land use growth assumptions are consistent with the growth targets and implementing the Regional Growth Strategy, PSRC review and certification looks broadly at all actions and measures taken in local comprehensive plans to implement VISION 2050 and achieve the regional growth shares. In developing comprehensive plan updates, jurisdictions will be asked to explain how the plan supports VISION 2050 and works to meet the Regional Growth Strategy over the long term.

- If adjustments to countywide growth targets are needed, they should be coordinated through the countywide process. Countywide planning groups should work to develop processes to reconcile any discrepancies between the countywide growth targets and land use growth assumptions in local comprehensive plans. Reconciliation processes should maintain consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy.

Regional Growth Strategy Adjustments to Support Targets

Cities and unincorporated areas are grouped into their respective regional geographies based on designated regional centers, planning for annexation and incorporation, and existing and planned high-capacity transit. PSRC recognizes that some of these qualities may change based on future planning. To reflect these changes, PSRC's Executive Board may make a technical amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy to potentially reclassify cities and unincorporated areas. Technical

amendments are limited to those updates needed to support establishing Growth Management Act population and employment targets; other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

Regional Growth Strategy Policies

MPP-RGS-1

Implement the Regional Growth Strategy through regional policies and programs, countywide planning policies and growth targets, local plans, and development regulations.

MPP-RGS-2

Use consistent countywide targeting processes for allocating population and employment growth consistent with the regional vision, including establishing: (a) local employment targets, (b) local housing targets based on population projections, and (c) local growth targets for each designated regional growth center and manufacturing/industrial center.

MPP-RGS-3

Provide flexibility in establishing and modifying growth targets within countywide planning policies, provided growth targets support the Regional Growth Strategy.

MPP-RGS-4

Accommodate the region's growth first and foremost in the urban growth area. Ensure that development in rural areas is consistent with the regional vision and the goals of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

MPP-RGS-5

Ensure long-term stability and sustainability of the urban growth area consistent with the regional vision.

MPP-RGS-6

Encourage efficient use of urban land by optimizing the development potential of existing urban lands and increasing density in the urban growth area in locations consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

MPP-RGS-7

Provide additional housing capacity in Metropolitan Cities in response to rapid employment growth, particularly through increased zoning for middle density housing. Metropolitan Cities must review housing needs and existing density in response to evidence of high displacement risk and/or rapid increase in employment.

MPP-RGS-8

Attract 65% of the region's residential growth and 75% of the region's employment growth to the regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas to realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around high-capacity transit investments. As jurisdictions plan for growth targets, focus development near high-capacity transit to achieve the regional goal.

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MPP-RGS-9

Focus a significant share of population and employment growth in designated regional growth centers.

MPP-RGS-10

Focus a significant share of employment growth in designated regional manufacturing/industrial centers.

MPP-RGS-11

Encourage growth in designated countywide centers.

MPP-RGS-12

Avoid increasing development capacity inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy in regional geographies not served by high-capacity transit.

MPP-RGS-13

Plan for commercial, retail, and community services that serve rural residents to locate in neighboring cities and existing activity areas to avoid the conversion of rural land into commercial uses.

MPP-RGS-14

Manage and reduce rural growth rates over time, consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, to maintain rural landscapes and lifestyles and protect resource lands and the environment.

MPP-RGS-15

Support the establishment of regional funding sources to acquire conservation easements in rural areas.

MPP-RGS-16

Identify strategies, incentives, and approaches to facilitate the annexation or incorporation of unincorporated areas within urban growth areas into cities.

Regional Growth Strategy Actions

Regional Actions

RGS-Action-1

Urban Growth Area: PSRC will report on urban growth area changes, annexation activity, and countywide coordination practices in each county.

RGS-Action-2

Track and Evaluate Growth: PSRC will study, track, and evaluate growth and development occurring in the central Puget Sound region and in high-capacity transit station areas in terms of meeting the goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy.

RGS-Action-3

Growth Targets: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will provide guidance and participate with countywide processes that set or modify local housing and employment targets. This effort will include consideration of the timing of Regional Growth Strategy implementation in relation to anticipated completion of regional transit investments and corresponding market responses. PSRC will also provide guidance on growth targets for designated regional centers and improving jobs-housing balance, and coordinate with member jurisdictions regarding buildable lands reporting.

RGS-Action-4

Rural Growth: PSRC, together with its members and stakeholders, will explore and implement, as feasible, opportunities for local, regional and state-wide conservation programs to reduce development pressure in rural and resource areas to conserve valuable open space areas:

- Establishing a regional structure for Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights and open space markets.

- Publishing a toolkit of open space conservation and other rural protection strategies.

- Working to facilitate city and urban development consistent with VISION 2050 that reduces rural development pressure.

RGS-Action-5

Regional Conservation Fund: PSRC, in collaboration with its members and other partners, will explore and support the establishment of regional funding sources to acquire conservation easements in rural areas.

RGS-Action-6

Outreach: PSRC will work with members to address ways the region can help communities understand and support increased growth within the urban growth area. VISION 2050's success is dependent on cities and counties welcoming new growth.

Local Actions

RGS-Action-7

Regional Growth Strategy: As counties and cities update their comprehensive plans in 2024 to accommodate growth targets and implement the Regional Growth Strategy, support the implementation of a full range of strategies, including zoning and development standards, incentives, infrastructure investments, housing tools, and economic development, to achieve a development pattern that aligns with VISION 2050 and to reduce rural growth rates over time and focus growth in cities.

RGS-Action-8

Plan for Jobs-Housing Balance: Countywide planning groups will consider data on jobs-housing balance, especially recent and projected employment growth within Metropolitan and Core cities, to set housing growth targets that substantially improve jobs-housing balance consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Metropolitan and Core cities experiencing high job growth will take measures to provide additional housing capacity for a range of housing types and affordability levels to meet the needs of those workers as well as the needs of existing residents who may be at risk of displacement.

RGS-Action-9

Growth Targets: Countywide planning groups will work to develop processes to reconcile any discrepancies between city and county adopted targets contained in local comprehensive plans.

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Environment

Goal: *The region cares for the natural environment by protecting and restoring natural systems, conserving habitat, improving water quality, and reducing air pollutants. The health of all residents and the economy is connected to the health of the environment. Planning at all levels considers the impacts of land use, development, and transportation on the ecosystem.*

The natural environment is the foundation for the region's high quality of life and thriving economy. It provides critical services and goods such as clean water and air, flood protection, building materials, food, recreation, and health benefits. The region's quality of life and natural environment are considered top assets for retaining and recruiting a talented and skilled workforce.

Recognizing the importance of a healthy natural environment, the region is making significant investments to protect and restore habitat and ecological systems. Cities and tribes are restoring shorelines. Counties are providing long-term protection for farm and forest land. Property owners are installing green infrastructure to clean stormwater runoff. These environmental investments are the result of collaboration between many partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

However, impacts from current and legacy systems still exist. Habitat is still being lost from conversion of forests, and stormwater from transportation and land use still pollutes the region's water. Our sewage treatment facilities are in need of being upgraded to reduce the amount of nitrates and chemicals of emerging concern entering Puget Sound. As a result, threatened and endangered species such as salmon and orca, indicators of the health of Puget Sound, continue to decline. Public health in some areas in the region is impacted by environmental conditions such as proximity to major roadways, sewage spills from outdated and inadequate facilities, and lack of access to open space and healthy food. In all areas of planning, racial and social equity must be addressed to ensure healthy places and outcomes for all.

Many federal, state, and local government regulations protect the environment. The Growth Management Act requires that resource lands and critical areas be designated and protected by local governments using best available science (RCW 36.70A.170). Local governments regulate stormwater through compliance with permits issued by the Washington State Department of Ecology. To comply with air quality requirements of the federal and state Clean Air acts, local governments provide transportation choices. Local governments also protect and restore the environment through non-regulatory actions such as providing open space for residents and incentivizing green building.

Land use, transportation, economic development, and human health are interconnected and therefore require integrated planning, regulations, and implementation actions. For example, the region's transit and trail systems can provide access to both jobs and to the region's open spaces, which support rural economies and the health of urban residents. Trees and vegetation provide habitat for pollinators, which in turn support the region's farm economy and food systems.

Although PSRC plays a limited and somewhat indirect role in funding for environmental issues and projects, PSRC does support local efforts to protect the environment by continuing to play a role in:

- Certifying comprehensive and subarea plans for local jurisdictions with consideration of how those plans impact upon the natural environment.
- Setting expectations for local comprehensive plans regarding stewardship of the natural environment, through the multicounty planning policies contained in VISION 2050.
- Approving funding grants to member jurisdictions for transportation projects.
- Collecting and sharing data, information, and innovative best practices.

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- Addressing challenges and encouraging multi-benefit solutions by facilitating discussions with interested parties.
- Developing regional-scale environmental planning information and policies, such as the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

VISION 2050 takes a balanced and responsible approach to future development. As understanding of growth's impacts and the region's capacity changes, the region's plan should evolve to ensure it represents a responsible path for the region's long-range future.

Source: Marcela Gara, Resource Media

Habitat, Open Space, and Environmental Stewardship

Conserving open space can help the region to achieve its goals for climate, habitat, air quality, park access, and Puget Sound recovery. Open space is a collective term for a range of green places, including natural lands, farmlands, working forests, aquatic systems, regional trails, and parks. Open space provides many services such as air, climate, and water quality protection and enhancement, fish and wildlife habitat, food chain support, flood storage, ground water recharge and discharge, carbon sequestration, erosion control, and recreation. Open space in the region has been valued at $11.5 to $25.3 billion a year.

In 2018, PSRC completed the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, which maps the network of regionally important open space in King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and identifies priority actions needed to increase access and sustain open spaces for the long term. The regional open space network covers about 3 million acres of public and private land and 339 miles of trails.

Figure 17 – Value of Open Space Services in the Central Puget Sound Region

	SERVICE	LOW	HIGH
	Aesthetic	$2,293,975	$9,509,713
	Air	$422,203	$529,187
	Food	$12,587	$86,472
	Shelter	$73,984	$111,407
	Water	$62,605	$1,925,347
	Health	$41,168	$50,352
	Play	$2,633,343	$4,132,675
	Disaster Mitigation	$1,860,499	$4,194,473
	Raw Materials	$23,279	$155,093
	Waste	$4,034,301	$4,568,983
$	TOTAL	$11,457,944	$25,263,700

Values in thousands. Source: Earth Economics 2015.

While much of the region's important open space and critical areas have been protected through growth management and local plans, conservation needs remain. Between 2007 and 2012, the region lost almost 12,000 acres of farmland. A strong economy in the region is accelerating growth and development, which puts further pressure on the open space network. The open space plan identifies approximately 463,000 acres of the regional open space network that are most at risk, 47 areas with high-priority urban open space needs, and 300 miles of regional trail needs. The open space plan also stresses the importance of environmental stewardship – the care of land, water, and air by individuals, communities, the private sector, and government agencies – in achieving the region's goals. Tribes in the region, the original stewards of the land, are being looked to for guidance on conserving open space and managing natural resources, from improving forest health with planned burns to increasing salmon populations through stream and floodplain restoration.

Recognizing that smaller-scale, yet important, open space land exists, the Growth Management Act requires that locally important open space and critical areas be identified and protected (RCW 36.70A.170). This has been accomplished in large part through local governments identifying critical areas and developing regulations to protect them. The Growth Management Act also directs local governments to identify lands that are useful for public purposes and to identify open space corridors within the urban growth area that are useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas (RCW 36.70A.160). Further identification of local urban open space corridors is an important step in protecting these areas. Ongoing assessment and coordination of critical areas will also be beneficial.

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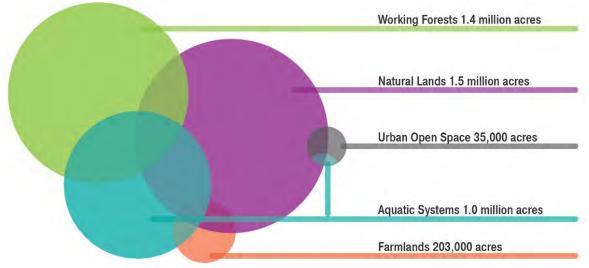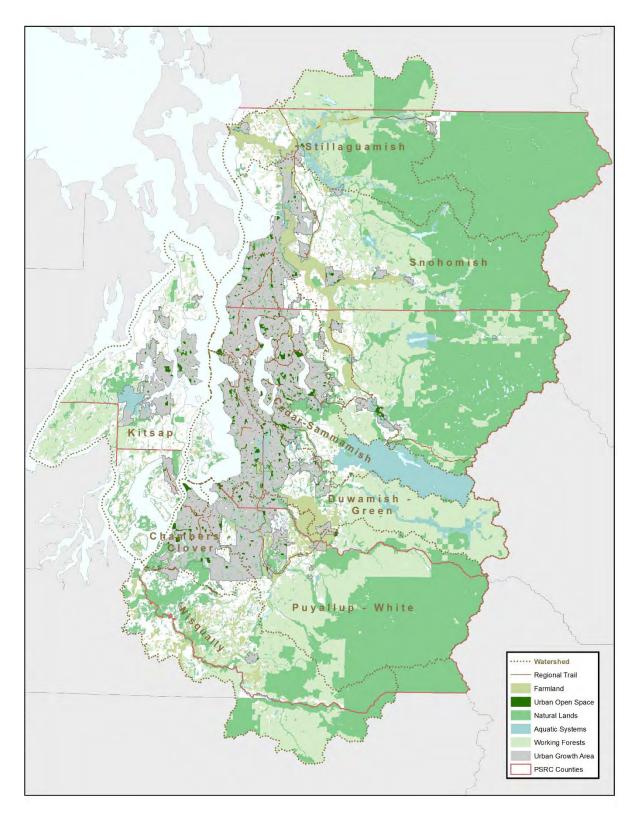**Figure 18 – Regional Open Space Network Area by Category Including Overlap**

Working Forests 1.4 million acres

Natural Lands 1.5 million acres

Urban Open Space 35,000 acres

Aquatic Systems 1.0 million acres

Farmlands 203,000 acres

Source: PSRC, 2018

Figure 19 – Regional Open Space Network

Legend:
- Watershed
- Regional Trail
- Farmland
- Urban Open Space
- Natural Lands
- Aquatic Systems
- Working Forests
- Urban Growth Area
- PSRC Counties
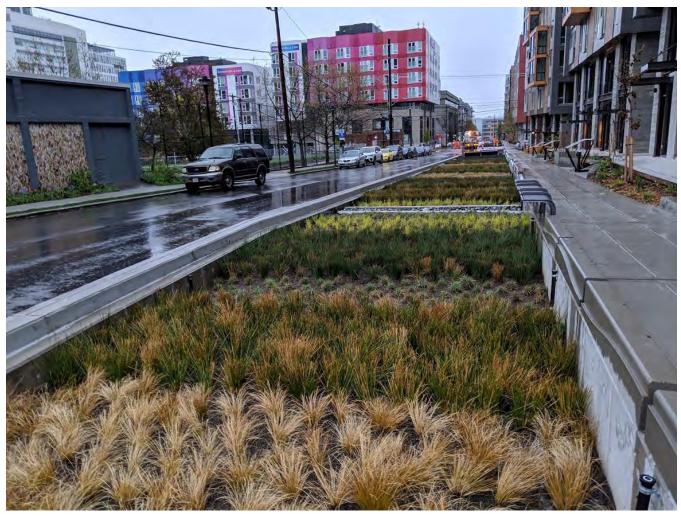
Source: PSRC Regional Open Space Conservation Plan

VISION 2050

Puget Sound Recovery

Though beautiful from a distance, Puget Sound is in serious trouble and is in a steady state of decline. The region has made some progress towards restoring the health of Puget Sound, including its freshwater, estuary, nearshore, marine, and upland habitats, but significant work and challenges remain. With the steep decline of orca and salmon populations, the health of Puget Sound has become a more urgent issue over the last 10 years. These trends, as well as some positive trends for water quality, have been analyzed by the Puget Sound Partnership, the state agency tasked with coordinating Puget Sound recovery. In the Partnership's 2019 State of the Sound report, many indicators are showing improvement, but just as many indicators are not. Efforts must be re-doubled to combat climate change and the effects of a growing population that threaten ecosystems and disproportionately affect vulnerable communities.

Today, strategies that can help to recover the health of Puget Sound are better understood. Stormwater pollution and changes in the hydrology of runoff patterns are among the biggest threats to Puget Sound water quality. Contamination of aquifers, low stream flows and excess nutrients and pollutants from sources such as wastewater treatment plants, agriculture and lawn runoff, leaky septic tanks, and polluted stormwater are other concerns. This is a critical time in the recovery of Puget Sound's health; it will never be as achievable or affordable as it is today.

Source: City of Seattle

Local governments play a critical role in Puget Sound recovery through actions such as protecting and restoring critical habitat, converting hardened shorelines back to more natural conditions, protecting aquifers, promoting and installing stormwater infrastructure, and upgrading sewage treatment facilities. Beyond treating stormwater, green stormwater infrastructure, or low-impact development, can:

- Remove pollutants from stormwater before it reaches our aquifers and waterways
- Create mini-parks with trees and plants
- Prevent flooding and erosion damage
- Provide habitat for pollinators
- Improve air quality and provide shade
- Replenish groundwater by reducing runoff and increasing infiltration
- Contribute to health and wellness by adding more green space
- Calm traffic and create safer streets for walking and biking
- Increase sewer capacity and reliability

Most of the region is in watersheds that eventually drain to Puget Sound. A watershed consists of all the land and water that drains toward a water body. Watersheds don't follow jurisdictional boundaries and require active collaboration between local governments, tribes, military installations, agencies, and other organizations. Planning for watersheds includes watershed assessment, mapping, monitoring of conditions and trends in streams and lakes, water quality assessment, gathering other environmental information, and development of a watershed plan. The concept of watershed planning is continuing to expand to integrate land use, stormwater, parks and recreation, and transportation. Some jurisdictions have developed holistic watershed protection and restoration plans which have helped to inform comprehensive plans and capital facilities plans. Some examples of projects identified in these plans that help to restore Puget Sound health include conserving open space that recharges groundwater, building regional stormwater facilities that clean and absorb polluted runoff, and restoring streams and floodplains that improve habitat and hydrology.

Air Quality

Air pollution contributes to a variety of public health issues such as an increase in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, heart attacks, cancer, and premature death. Climate change, a closely related issue, is discussed in the following chapter. Populations particularly sensitive to air pollution include youth, the elderly, and people with cardiovascular and lung diseases. People who have lower incomes also face risk from air pollution because they often lack access to healthcare and live near major roadways or other pollution sources.

Significant progress has been made in curbing air pollution over the last several decades. However, fine particles, air toxics, and ground-level ozone continue to be a concern, especially for communities close to highways and industrial areas. Air pollution also obscures many of the most scenic vistas, such as views of the Olympic and Cascade mountain ranges, including Mount Rainier.

VISION 2050

Environment Policies

MPP-En-1

Develop and implement regionwide environmental strategies, coordinating among local jurisdictions, tribes, and countywide planning groups.

MPP-En-2

Use integrated and interdisciplinary approaches for environmental planning and assessment at regional, countywide, and local levels.

MPP-En-3

Maintain and, where possible, improve air and water quality, soils, and natural systems to ensure the health and well-being of people, animals, and plants. Reduce the impacts of transportation on air and water quality and climate change.

MPP-En-4

Ensure that all residents of the region, regardless of race, social, or economic status, have clean air, clean water, and other elements of a healthy environment.

MPP-En-5

Locate development in a manner that minimizes impacts to natural features. Promote the use of innovative environmentally sensitive development practices, including design, materials, construction, and on-going maintenance.

MPP-En-6

Use the best information available at all levels of planning, especially scientific information, when establishing and implementing environmental standards established by any level of government.

MPP-En-7

Reduce and mitigate noise and light pollution caused by transportation, industries, public facilities, and other sources.

MPP-En-8

Reduce impacts to vulnerable populations and areas that have been disproportionately affected by noise, air pollution, or other environmental impacts.

MPP-En-9

Enhance urban tree canopy to support community resilience, mitigate urban heat, manage stormwater, conserve energy, improve mental and physical health, and strengthen economic prosperity.

MPP-En-10

Support and incentivize environmental stewardship on private and public lands to protect and enhance habitat, water quality, and other ecosystem services, including protection of watersheds and wellhead areas that are sources of the region's drinking water supplies.

MPP-En-11

Designate, protect, and enhance significant open spaces, natural resources, and critical areas through mechanisms, such as the review and comment of countywide planning policies and local plans and provisions.

MPP-En-12

Identify, preserve, and enhance significant regional open space networks and linkages across jurisdictional boundaries through implementation and update of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

MPP-En-13

Preserve and restore native vegetation and tree canopy, especially where it protects habitat and contributes to overall ecological function.

MPP-En-14

Identify and protect wildlife corridors both inside and outside the urban growth area.

MPP-En-15

Provide parks, trails, and open space within walking distance of urban residents. Prioritize historically underserved communities for open space improvements and investments.

MPP-En-16

Preserve and enhance habitat to support healthy wildlife and accelerate the recovery of salmon, orca, and other threatened and endangered species and species of local importance.

MPP-En-17

Maintain and restore natural hydrological functions and water quality within the region's ecosystems and watersheds to recover the health of Puget Sound.

MPP-En-18

Reduce stormwater impacts from transportation and development through watershed planning, redevelopment and retrofit projects, and low-impact development.

MPP-En-19

Reduce the use of toxic pesticides, fertilizers, and other products to the extent feasible and identify alternatives that minimize risks to human health and the environment.

MPP-En-20

Restore – where appropriate and possible – the region's freshwater and marine shorelines, watersheds, and estuaries to a natural condition for ecological function and value.

MPP-En-21

Continue efforts to reduce pollutants from transportation activities, including through the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles and increasing alternatives to driving alone, as well as design and land use.

MPP-En-22

Meet all federal and state air quality standards and reduce emissions of air toxics and greenhouse gases.

Environment Actions

Regional Actions

En-Action-1

Open Space Planning: PSRC will work with member jurisdictions, resource agencies, tribes, military installations and service branches, and interest groups to implement conservation, restoration, stewardship, and other recommendations in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. PSRC will review and comment on alignment with the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan during the comprehensive plan certification process. On a periodic basis, evaluate and update the plan.

En-Action-2

Watershed Planning Support: PSRC and the Puget Sound Partnership will coordinate to support watershed planning to inform land use, transportation, and stormwater planning and projects that improve the health of Puget Sound.

En-Action-3

Watershed Planning: Counties and cities, together with other jurisdictions in the watershed, will continue to participate in watershed planning to integrate land use, transportation, stormwater, and related disciplines across the watershed to improve the health of Puget Sound. Include planning for culvert removal and work with tribal, federal, state, and local governments in planning, funding, and implementation to ensure the effective and efficient use of funds to restore salmon habitat.

Local Action

En-Action-4

Local Open Space Planning: In the next periodic update to the comprehensive plan, counties and cities will create goals and policies that address local open space conservation and access needs as identified in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, prioritizing areas with higher racial and social inequities and rural and resource land facing development pressure. Counties and cities should work together to develop a long-term funding strategy and action plan to accelerate open space protection and enhancement.
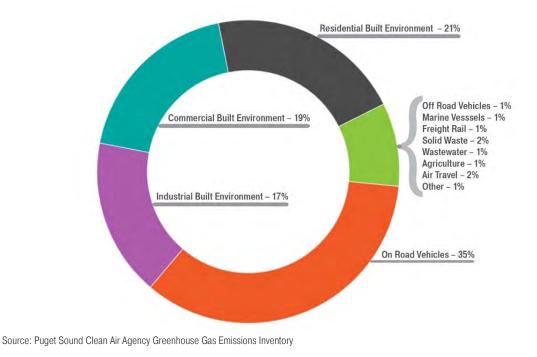
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Climate Change

Goal: *The region substantially reduces emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change in accordance with the goals of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (50% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050) and prepares for climate change impacts.*

Climate change is an urgent environmental, economic, health, and equity threat being addressed at all levels, from the local to an international scale. Caused by an increase in greenhouse gases trapping heat in the atmosphere, climate change is a significant cross-cutting issue throughout VISION 2050.

Climate change influences human health in numerous ways. The potential health effects include increased respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, injuries and premature deaths related to extreme weather events, food- and water-borne illnesses and other infectious diseases, and threats to mental health. Vulnerable populations may be disproportionately impacted by climate change.

A 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report found that human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0° Celsius of global warming above pre-industrial levels. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5° Celsius between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate. These levels of warming are expected to cause long-term changes to the climate, resulting in risks and impacts such as increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, changes in precipitation and snow pack, increases to size and duration of wildfires, and other effects. While climate change is an urgent global issue, local governments play a crucial role in reducing and adapting to its impacts.

In the Puget Sound region, the largest sources of greenhouse gases come from transportation and the built environment, including residential, commercial, and industrial activities.

Figure 20 – Sources of Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Residential Built Environment – 21%
Off Road Vehicles – 1%
Marine Vesssels – 1%
Freight Rail – 1%
Solid Waste – 2%
Wastewater – 1%
Agriculture – 1%
Air Travel – 2%
Other – 1%
Commercial Built Environment – 19%
Industrial Built Environment – 17%
On Road Vehicles – 35%

Source: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

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Within the residential and commercial built environment, electricity consumption represents the largest share of emissions. Within the transportation sector, passenger vehicles represent the largest share (74%), followed by freight and service vehicles (14%).
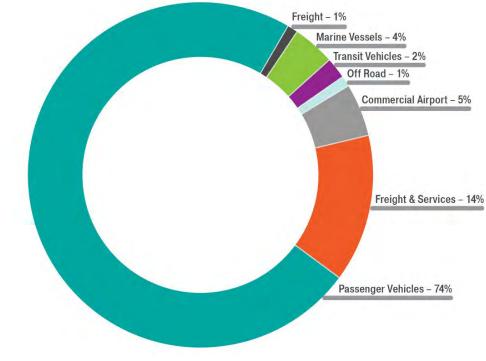
Figure 21 – Sources of Regional Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Freight – 1%
Marine Vessels – 4%
Transit Vehicles – 2%
Off Road – 1%
Commercial Airport – 5%
Freight & Services – 14%
Passenger Vehicles – 74%

Source: Puget Sound Clean Air Agency Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

State, Regional, and Local Activities

State

Washington state has long recognized the threat climate change poses to economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment. In 2008 the Washington State Legislature set the following limits on Washington's greenhouse gas emissions. Revised, more protective, targets were adopted in 2020 and went into effect on June 11th, 2020:

- By 2020, reduce total greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels.
- By 2030, reduce total greenhouse gas emissions to 45% below 1990 levels.
- By 2040, reduce total greenhouse gas emissions to 70% below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, reduce total greenhouse gas emissions to 95% below 1990 levels and achieve net zero emissions.

The state has enacted numerous strategies and actions to provide a statewide framework for achieving these limits, including the Clean Energy Transformation Act passed in 2019, which transitions the state to 100% clean electricity over the next 25 years. Other initiatives and rules have addressed emissions from state agencies, renewable energy targets, clean vehicles, green buildings, and responding to the impacts from climate change.

Region

In February 2017, the board of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency adopted the following economy-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the four-county central Puget Sound region:

- By 2030, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the region to 50% below 1990 levels.
- By 2050, reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in the region to 80% below 1990 levels.

Since transportation is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in the region, the agency identified candidate actions and strategies to reduce transportation-related emissions and support achievement of the targets. These include supporting the policies and strategies included in PSRC's regional plans, as well as accelerating zero-emission vehicle adoption and pursuit of a clean fuel standard, among other strategies.

Local

Many cities, counties, and other organizations in the region have also adopted greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, which vary in breadth and timeframes. For example, King County adopted targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25% by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050, from a 2007 baseline. Tacoma has a goal of reducing emissions 40% from 1990 levels by 2020. Snohomish County's goal is to reduce emissions from county operations 20% from 2000 levels by 2020. Many other jurisdictions are also addressing climate change and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Some examples of actions being taken at the local level include a resolution passed by the Everett City Council to include in their Climate Action Plan a target to run on 100% renewable energy by 2045, and Bainbridge Island's Housing Design Demonstration Project program, which incentivizes green building certifications.

Efforts at all levels of government have been implemented to both mitigate climate change and prepare for its impacts. PSRC supports the efforts of partner agencies and member jurisdictions in their efforts to address climate change and meet their respective goals. This includes VISION 2050 policies and the Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy included in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy

PSRC provides planning and policy guidance that can help the region achieve significant reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and land use, as well as supporting efforts to prepare for the impacts from climate change.

VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy, multicounty planning policies and actions promote compact growth patterns, low-carbon travel choices, forest and open space protection, and other sustainability strategies that help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts from climate change.

VISION 2050

The Regional Transportation Plan is the long-range transportation element of VISION 2050, providing the path for a sustainable, multimodal transportation system to accommodate the needs of a growing population. Subsequent to the adoption of VISION 2040, a Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy was adopted as part of the Regional Transportation Plan consisting of land use, user fees, choices and technology.

The Regional Transportation Plan, which is updated every four years, includes programs and investments that encompass all four of the elements of the strategy. In the last decade many actions have been taken at the federal, state and regional level to advance implementation of the strategy, which is designed to support and complement statewide, regional, and local efforts to achieve meaningful emission reductions.

An analysis of the region's Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy is conducted as part of every plan update. The analysis of the 2018 plan resulted in potential emission reductions from the combined categories within a range of 24% to 75% below 2006 base year levels. This broad range is primarily reflective of the varying degrees of effort within each category, with the lower end of the range encompassing the VISION 2040 growth strategy adopted at the time and the investments and policies in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. The higher end of the range of emission reductions reflects aggressive electrification of the transportation system, as well as additional opportunities as described below.

Land Use

Over the last decade, many land use actions, programs, and planning activities have been advanced. Examples include local adoption of growth targets within each county in the region and continued work on transit-oriented development. As part of the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy, growth will be further concentrated around transit stations throughout the region, which will help the region continue to reduce emissions. Additional reductions could be achieved at the local level through

changes to development patterns that create attractive, compact, and walkable environments, and that encourage location of new residential and commercial construction close to services and amenities, lessening the need for driving.

User Fees

User fee systems are in place on several facilities in the region, including State Route 167, Interstate 405, State Route 520, the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and the State Route 99 tunnel through downtown Seattle. The Regional Transportation Plan's financial strategy assumes a transition from traditional pricing mechanisms to a user fee system, including selected facility tolls and a road usage charge system, after 2025. User fees charge drivers for when and how much they use the system, rather than by gallon of gasoline.

Research suggests that increasing the rates of these fees could result in a change in travel behavior and demand, moving more trips away from single occupant vehicles. VISION 2050 calls for further pursuit of alternative transportation financing mechanisms.

Transportation Choices

Significant investments have been made over the last decade to provide multimodal transportation improvements, including new trails, bus rapid transit and light rail services, and high occupancy vehicle lanes. The Regional Transportation Plan includes a coordinated network of regional and local transit investments, resulting in significant improvements in frequent transit service throughout the region. Improvements are still needed, however, to ensure residents have safe and convenient access to these frequent transit networks, particularly through nonmotorized and high occupancy modes. Local jurisdictions play an important role by including these investments in their capital planning. VISION 2050 further supports the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system that supports all modes and ensures equitable access to goods, services, and amenities.

Technology

Significant federal actions have been taken over the last decade to improve the fuel economy of vehicles and reduce emissions from fuels. These include updated fuel economy standards and improvements to the fuel efficiency of heavy-duty vehicles. Significant strides have also been made in advancing the transition to electric vehicles. Ongoing coordination among a variety of agencies and stakeholders throughout the region is accelerating this transition. A wide array of electric vehicle choices are coming into the market now and into the future. These include not only electric passenger vehicles but will include pickup trucks, delivery vans and electric shuttle vehicles, and further advancements and technologies continue to be pursued in these and other sectors. Manufacturers are introducing heavy duty medium and long-haul trucks and electric transit and school buses to the market, and local transit agencies are committed to increased purchases of electric and other alternative fueled transit buses. In the maritime sector, the Washington State Ferries has committed to electrification of several ferries operating within the Puget Sound region and the Port of Seattle has made cruise ship cold ironing capability available at the Terminal 91 facility. Further, in a joint effort with the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), the Port of Seattle is developing a new cruise and cargo terminal with cold ironing capability for both cargo and cruise operations. To reduce emissions from drayage activities, the NWSA Clean Truck Program now ensures that all 4,000 trucks entering international marine terminals have a 2007 or newer engine or a certified equivalent emission control system. Because the electricity available in the Puget Sound region is largely produced from hydro-electric and renewable resources and it will be replacing fossil fuels in each of the sectors identified above, there is high potential for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation in a variety of modes.

VISION 2050

Technological improvements to vehicles and fuels have the potential to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, a variety of strategies will be required to help achieve this outcome, particularly related to electric vehicles. These include mechanisms to support charging infrastructure in buildings and in public rights of way, expanding education and incentives on electric vehicles, encouraging electric vehicles in private and public fleets, and other local, regional, and state actions.

Other strategies to address climate change, outside the scope of the region's Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy, include sequestering and storing greenhouse gases through additional actions to protect and restore carbon sinks such as forests, soils, wetlands, estuaries, and urban trees. The IPCC special report on strategies to stay below an increase in temperatures of 1.5 degrees Celsius indicates that it is very likely that carbon capture and sequestration technologies will need to be further developed and deployed. In addition, building energy emissions are being reduced through conservation and green building practices such as incorporating solar panels, using efficient materials, and monitoring and managing energy consumption. Strides are also being made with alternative fuels for other sectors. For example, the Port of Seattle has set aggressive goals for the implementation of sustainable aviation fuels. VISION 2050 supports acceleration of these varied climate solutions.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy is evaluated and refined every four years as part of the update of the Regional Transportation Plan. During this monitoring cycle, the combined results from VISION 2050 and the planned regional transportation system will be analyzed for the potential to achieve meaningful emission reductions. While both the state limits and the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency targets encompass all sectors of the economy – and PSRC's analysis focuses on the combined effects of land use and on-road transportation – these will be used as benchmarks against which the Regional Transportation Plan analysis will be compared. In addition, PSRC's analysis will be incorporated into the full spectrum of climate strategies to demonstrate impact and progress, an effort also known as a climate wedge analysis. Further, implementation of the Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy will be monitored and reported, including continued improvements and further potential gains.

Climate Change Impacts in the Central Puget Sound Region

In addition to reducing emissions contributing to climate change, the region is actively working towards resilience and preparing for current and future climate change impacts. The University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group published State of Knowledge: Climate Change in Puget Sound in 2015, describing expected impacts from climate change in the Puget Sound region. Changes are expected to temperature, precipitation, sea level, ocean acidification, and natural variability. These changes will affect snowpack, streamflow, landslides, flooding, species and habitat, forests, and agriculture. In addition, impacts from climate change will have many effects on people and communities, including the built environment, human health, and the economy. Communities of color, Indigenous people, and people with lower incomes are at higher risk due to greater exposure to hazards and often have fewer resources to respond to those hazards.

Planning for adaptation and resilience will include identifying the local implications of the full range of climate impacts and actions to address these hazards. Examples of actions being taken at the state and local levels include incorporating resilience (to climate, seismic, and other risks) in comprehensive plans and hazard mitigation plans, changing the design of bridges and other capital infrastructure to withstand more extreme weather events, and developing transportation evacuation plans for hospitals in emergency events. VISION 2050 supports planning and action for resilience and adaptation, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Since climate change is a cross-cutting topic across a variety of regional planning issues, VISION 2050 provides guidance in all policy sections of the plan for reducing emissions and protecting the climate. The Regional Growth Strategy, as described in the preceding chapter, is a core element of the Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy and achieving compact growth patterns to reduce the need for single occupant vehicles. Additional policies throughout VISION 2050 also address important climate-related activities, such as protecting forest lands and tree canopy, promoting a multimodal transportation system and encouraging use of alternative modes, advancing electrification of public and private vehicles, increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, and addressing resilience of infrastructure and communities. The primary climate related policies and actions are identified below.

Climate Change Policies

MPP-CC-1

Advance the adoption and implementation of actions that substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of state, regional, and local emissions reduction goals, including targets adopted by the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency.

MPP-CC-2

Reduce building energy use through green building and retrofit of existing buildings.

MPP-CC-3

Reduce greenhouse gases by expanding the use of conservation and alternative energy sources, electrifying the transportation system, and reducing vehicle miles traveled by increasing alternatives to driving alone.

MPP-CC-4

Protect and restore natural resources that sequester and store carbon such as forests, farmland, wetlands, estuaries, and urban tree canopy.

MPP-CC-5

Pursue the development of energy management technology as part of meeting the region's energy needs.

MPP-CC-6

Address impacts to vulnerable populations and areas that have been disproportionately affected by climate change.

MPP-CC-7

Advance state, regional, and local actions that support resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts.

MPP-CC-8

Increase resilience by identifying and addressing the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on water, land, infrastructure, health, and the economy. Prioritize actions to protect the most vulnerable populations.

MPP-CC-9

Identify and address the impacts of climate change on the region's hydrological systems.

MPP-CC-10

Address rising sea water by siting and planning for relocation of hazardous industries and essential public services away from the 500-year floodplain.

MPP-CC-11

Support achievement of regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals through countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans.

MPP-CC-12

Prioritize transportation investments that support achievement of regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, such as by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Climate Change Actions

Regional Actions

CC-Action-1

Greenhouse Gas Strategy. PSRC will work with local governments and other key agencies and stakeholders to advance the development and implementation of the region's Greenhouse Gas Strategy to equitably achieve meaningful reductions of emissions toward achievement of the region's greenhouse gas reduction goals. The strategy will:
- Build on the Four-Part Strategy in the Regional Transportation Plan
- Address emissions from transportation, land use and development, and other sources of greenhouse gases
- Promote effective actions to reduce greenhouse gases, such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, conversion to renewable energy systems in transportation and the built environment (e.g. electrification), and reduction in embedded carbon in new infrastructure and development
- Explore options for PSRC to further emission reductions in the aviation sector
- Be guided by principles of racial equity
- Include a measurement framework to inform the evaluation of transportation investments and local comprehensive plans
- Develop guidance and provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions to implement climate change strategies, including a guidebook of best practice policies and actions

Regular evaluation and monitoring will occur, at least every four years, as part of the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, with reports to PSRC policy boards.

CC-Action 2

Resilience and Climate Preparedness: PSRC will engage in regional resilience planning and climate preparedness, including development of a regional inventory of climate hazards, assistance to member organizations, and continued research and coordination with partners such as the Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative and tribes. Climate resilience actions will focus on equitable outcomes, particularly for historically marginalized communities, at greater risk and with fewer resources.

VISION 2050

Local Action

CC-Action-3

Policies and Actions to Address Climate Change: Cities and counties will incorporate emissions reduction policies and actions that contribute meaningfully toward regional greenhouse gas emission goals, along with equitable climate resiliency measures, in their comprehensive planning. Strategies include land uses that reduce vehicle miles traveled and promote transit, biking, and walking consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, developing and implementing climate friendly building codes, investments in multimodal transportation choices, and steps to encourage a transition to cleaner transportation and energy systems.

CC-Action-4

Resilience: Cities and counties will update land use plans for climate adaptation and resilience. Critical areas will be updated based on climate impacts from sea level rise, flooding, wildfire hazards, urban heat, and other hazards. The comprehensive plans will identify mitigation measures addressing these hazards including multimodal emergency and evacuation routes and prioritizing mitigation of climate impacts on highly impacted communities and vulnerable populations.

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Development Patterns

Goal: *The region creates healthy, walkable, compact, and equitable transit-oriented communities that maintain unique character and local culture, while conserving rural areas and creating and preserving open space and natural areas.*

The region's identity now and in the future is significantly shaped by the development patterns and design of its counties, cities, and neighborhoods. To accommodate growth while maintaining different types of communities, sustainable land use strategies will enhance existing neighborhoods, leverage transportation options, and protect natural resources. Comprehensive plans, subarea plans, functional plans, and development regulations will continue to support healthy compact, pedestrian-oriented development with access to public transportation and work to transform existing communities that lack connectivity and walkable places.

Planning for growth near transit is an example of how land use can enhance communities. The region has made a transformative commitment to invest in a regional high-capacity transit system. These transit investments and growth around them can have a powerful influence on new and existing residents and businesses by fostering opportunity, increasing the attractiveness of transit, and boosting market demand that fuels change and growth.

VISION 2050 addresses a spectrum of land use planning issues, including aligning transportation investments with rates of development, managing growth in rural and resource areas, planning for the transition of unincorporated areas into cities, involving diverse voices in planning, community design, and preserving special land uses. Each of these tools and approaches is important for achieving the Regional Growth Strategy and accommodating new growth while supporting and enhancing existing communities.

Building Urban Communities

The region's existing and planned transit system connects central places throughout the region, providing people access to attainable housing and jobs, and affordable transportation choices. In many cases, transit options connect dense, vibrant urban places that are planned to accommodate more growth. As the transit network expands, suburban communities will also have access to more mobility options, and an opportunity to transform from auto-oriented areas with separated land uses to compact, mixed-use, and walkable neighborhoods. Growth in compact urban communities, especially near transit stations, can lead to a range of substantial social, environmental, and health benefits, including the potential to:

- Promote health by encouraging walking and biking, improving social connections, cutting air pollution, and reducing motor vehicle accidents
- Lower household expenses for transportation
- Reduce municipal infrastructure costs
- Help meet the growing demand for residents and businesses to locate in "walkable communities"
- Curb land consumption, help conserve farms and natural ecosystems, and protect water quality
- Cut energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions associated with both transportation and the built environment

The Growth Management Act focuses on accommodating growth in urban areas that include housing choices, workplaces, retail, and services, while providing parks, transportation options, and other public amenities. Redevelopment of areas that separate land uses and lack connections like sidewalks and bike lanes is important to achieving healthy communities that can be effectively served by transit. Urban design is important in all communities to provide safe access to schools and parks. It encourages development that supports a community vision and memorable places that contribute to local character throughout the region.

A strong identity and connection with place enhances a sense of community belonging, stimulates economic activity, and makes for more livable and vibrant communities. Involving community members in the planning process provides an opportunity to understand community needs and priorities. It helps identify what investments are needed, such as public services, transportation options, or environmental needs.

VISION 2050 acknowledges and works to remedy historic inequities that have kept many low-income residents and people of color from accessing opportunities to improve their quality of life. Greater social and economic opportunity for current and future residents will result in stronger communities and a stronger region. VISION 2050 supports inclusive community involvement to ensure plans and policies identify the needs of diverse communities, protect and enhance cultural resources, and embrace community cohesion in the face of change.
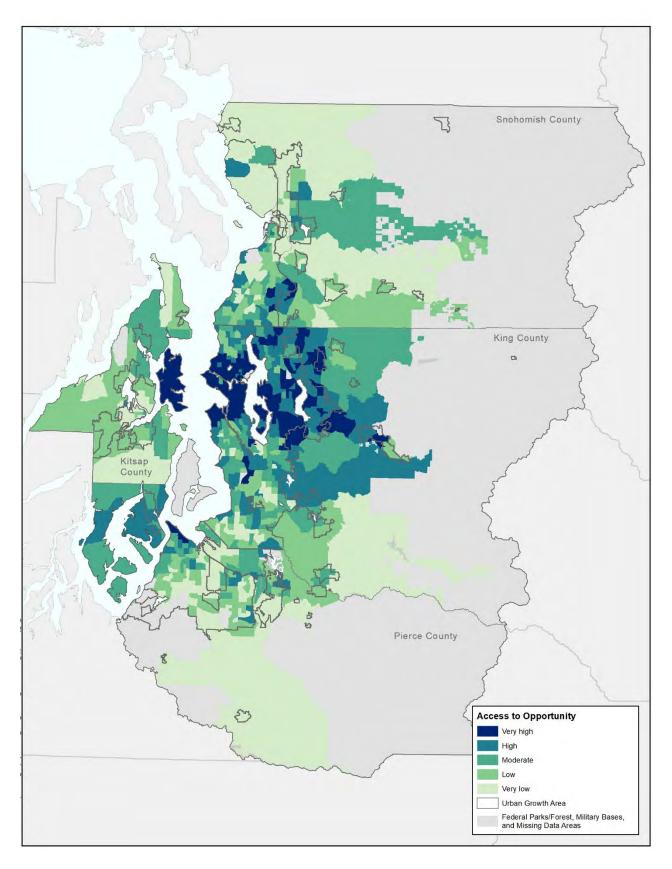
Opportunity Mapping

The Opportunity Mapping Tool assesses the conditions in neighborhoods across the region. Decades of research demonstrates that neighborhood conditions and access to opportunity play a significant role in life outcomes. The premise of opportunity mapping is that all people should have fair access to the critical structures and social infrastructure to succeed in life, and that connecting people to opportunity creates positive, transformative change in communities.

The tool combines measures of five key elements of neighborhood opportunity and positive life outcomes: education, economic health, housing and neighborhood quality, mobility and transportation, and health and environment. The neighborhood indicators are combined to create an overall "opportunity score" for each census tract, and areas are categorized between very low and very high access to opportunity.

The tool can provide information on existing disparities in the region that may be exacerbated as a result of policy and planning decisions. It can provide a lens to evaluate planning and siting decisions. Communities should consider access to opportunity as they plan for the future.

Figure 22 – Opportunity Map

Success of the Regional Growth Strategy depends on accommodating new growth without displacing existing residents and businesses. Current neighborhood conditions can indicate areas where economic, physical, and cultural displacement may be more likely to occur. PSRC developed a tool to assess the risk of displacement and inform regional and local planning.

Displacement Risk

The Displacement Risk Mapping Tool uses a composite of indicators representing five elements of neighborhood displacement risks: socio-demographics, transportation qualities, neighborhood characteristics, housing, and civic engagement.

The tool compiles census tract data from these five categories of measures to determine level of risk by neighborhood: lower, moderate, and higher. It can be used to better understand how growth may impact existing communities and when steps are needed to help existing residents and businesses remain in their communities.
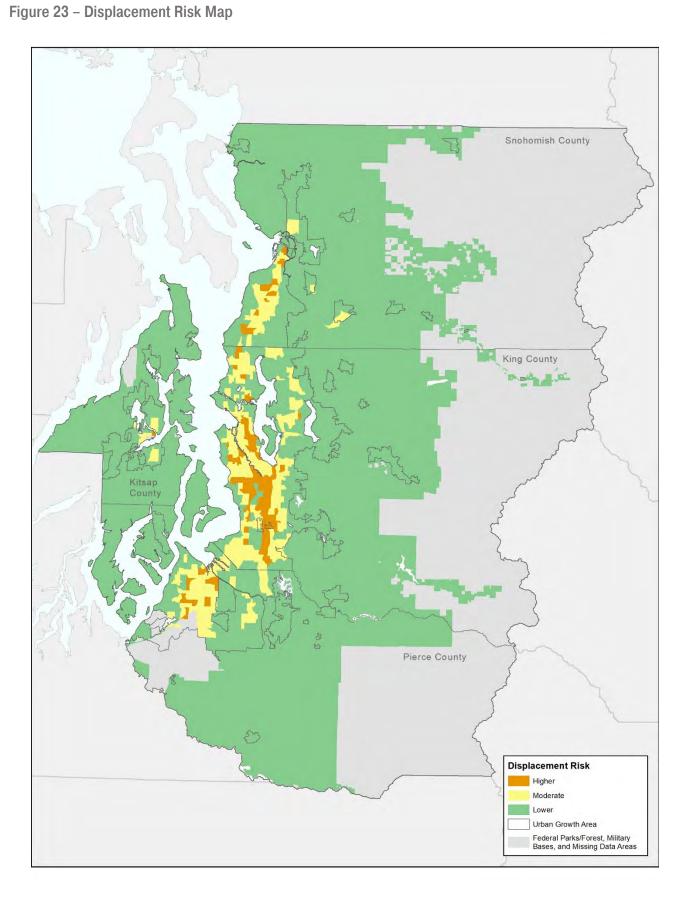
Analysis of the draft Regional Growth Strategy has shown that many areas with current and future high-capacity transit investments have higher displacement risk than other parts of the region. Cities and counties need to act swiftly to mitigate displacement risk and support inclusive growth near transit so both existing and future residents are able to benefit from the opportunities these major transit investments can provide.

Promoting Healthy Communities

How residents live, work, and get around affects their physical, social, and mental well-being. Communities that are compact, with jobs, parks, services and amenities, and transit in walking distance, have better health and social well-being outcomes. As communities grow and redevelop, retrofitting existing urban areas to better support compact walkable development, with sidewalks and bike lanes that connect people to jobs and services, will promote physical activity and make healthier communities more accessible. As communities are retrofitted and rebuilt, ensuring spaces are people-oriented and accessible to all residents, especially those with physical disabilities, will ensure places are inclusive and welcoming.

Health is more than just the absence of disease. Health risks and outcomes vary by place, race, and income. Disparities increase for people of color and those with low incomes; they face more barriers to affordable, quality housing, health care, and healthy foods. Neighborhoods with higher concentrations of residents with low incomes often suffer from long-term disinvestment and may lack resources to provide sidewalks, parks and open space, access to fresh fruits and vegetables or farmers' markets, quality grocery stores, and other community assets that encourage healthy habits. Local plans should identify and address community-specific health disparities to improve health outcomes for all residents.

Figure 23 – Displacement Risk Map

Displacement Risk
- Higher
- Moderate
- Lower
- Urban Growth Area
- Federal Parks/Forest, Military Bases, and Missing Data Areas

Centers: Supporting Connections to Opportunity

Regionally designated centers, local centers, and the areas surrounding high-capacity transit stations serve a critical role in the region. These mixed-use centers offer a diverse collection of services, mobility options, housing, and jobs for the region's residents. The region's transit network connects these central places and increases access to services and jobs for residents throughout the region.

Many of these areas are equipped to accommodate greater shares of future population and employment growth – allowing more residents to have access to the range of opportunities available in these central places, including new mobility options as the regional high-capacity transit network expands. These areas also present opportunities for redevelopment and infill. Along major transit routes, redevelopment can occur in the form of transit-oriented development. Mixed-use projects that provide housing, employment, services, and retail can focus around a transit station or hub and serve as an activity node for adjacent neighborhoods. PSRC's Growing Transit Communities Strategy provides guidance for promoting thriving and equitable transit communities. VISION 2050 calls for PSRC to work with transit agencies and local jurisdictions to develop guidance for transit-supportive densities. Additionally, policies support the development of centers in all communities to provide opportunity for all the region's residents to live, work, and play.

Regional Centers

The entire region benefits from central places that are connected by transit. A limited number of regional centers are formally designated by PSRC to accommodate a significant share of the region's growth and development and implement the Regional Growth Strategy. PSRC's Regional Centers Framework has further refined the different types and expectations of regional centers.

As focal points for investment and development, regional growth centers can help promote equitable access to housing, services, healthcare, quality transit service, and employment. The two types of regional growth centers—urban growth centers and metro growth centers—are primary locations of regionally significant businesses and governmental and cultural facilities. Regional growth centers also provide a mixture of housing types and community facilities. Many of the regional growth centers represent opportunities to transform low-density, auto-oriented development into mixed-use, walkable places through redevelopment.

The Regional Centers Framework identifies two types of regional manufacturing/industrial centers—industrial employment and industrial growth centers. These centers preserve lands for living-wage jobs in basic industries and trade and provide areas for employment to grow in the future. Manufacturing/industrial centers provide economic diversity, support national and international trade, and offer higher-than-average wages. These centers can also generate substantial revenue for local governments, depending on the types of industrial land uses. To preserve existing centers of intensive manufacturing and industrial activity, the region should provide necessary infrastructure and services and restrict incompatible land uses in these areas. The Regional Centers Framework calls for strictly limiting commercial uses in manufacturing/industrial centers. These centers are also not appropriate for residential uses.

Countywide Centers, Local Centers, and Transit Station Areas

Countywide growth centers, countywide industrial centers, and local centers serve important roles as central places for activities and services and places where future growth can occur. These local hubs are identified and designated by the region's countywide groups and local jurisdictions. Countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans describe the local expectations of these places. Countywide centers are expected to accommodate new population and employment growth.

Transit station areas are central hubs within the region's transportation network. They connect residents and workers to jobs and services in the rest of the region and offer access to nearby civic and public spaces. These places, with access to the region's jobs, institutions, and services, are critical focal points for achieving equitable access to opportunity for the region's residents.

VISION 2050 encourages focusing growth in these areas and conducting station area planning to maximize benefits. While many transit station areas serve as ideal locations for growth and development, not all will play a role in accommodating significant new growth. Some high-capacity transit station areas are located in rural areas. These provide important connections to urban areas but are not appropriate for the same level of growth as stations located in the urban growth area. Other stations will be access points to the regional system. Planning at the local level will help to define how local governments can best encourage walkable neighborhoods around these stations.

Additional transit in the region, including frequent and local bus service, also provides valuable connections. Local bus service and other mobility options link residents to the regional high-capacity transit network and to local destinations. Supporting all types of transit service by making it attractive to use and providing safe and convenient options for walking and biking will give more residents affordable and sustainable access to jobs and services in communities throughout the region.

Through the planning process for central places, local jurisdictions may develop a unique vision and a blueprint for regulations, incentives, and investments that successfully attract residential and employment growth consistent with that vision. VISION 2050 envisions that each jurisdiction in the region will take steps to further evolve one or more central places as mixed-use areas of residences, employment, and services. Each center – no matter how large or small – should serve as a focal point of the community and should be easy to access and travel around.

Transit Station Areas

High-capacity transit station areas serve important roles in accommodating growth and can be located within or outside of designated regional growth centers and countywide centers. Station areas are within walking distance (about a half mile) of existing and planned light rail and streetcar stations, commuter rail stations, and ferry terminals and within a quarter mile of all existing and planned bus rapid transit stations.
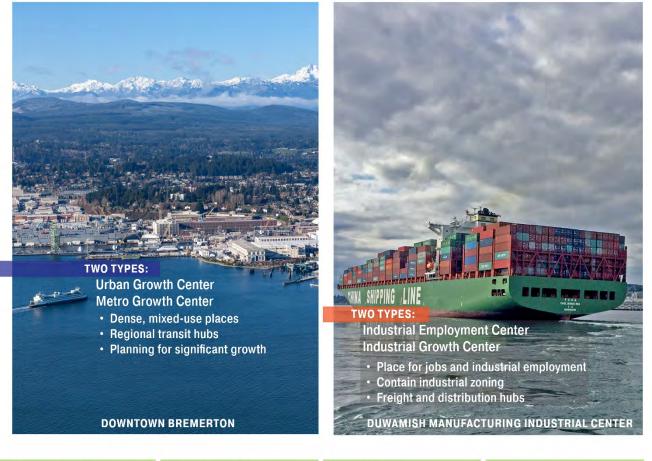
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Figure 24 – Types of Centers and Transit Station Areas

Regional Growth Center

Location of compact, pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of housing, jobs, retail, services, and other destinations.

TWO TYPES:
Urban Growth Center
Metro Growth Center
- Dense, mixed-use places
- Regional transit hubs
- Planning for significant growth

DOWNTOWN BREMERTON

Manufacturing/Industrial Center

Areas where regionally significant manufacturing and industrial land uses are concentrated and preserved.

TWO TYPES:
Industrial Employment Center
Industrial Growth Center
- Place for jobs and industrial employment
- Contain industrial zoning
- Freight and distribution hubs

DUWAMISH MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIAL CENTER

Transit Station Area

Places within walking distance to high-capacity transit stations, where compact, mixed-use development patterns can support frequent transit service.

Areas within:
½ mile to light rail, commuter rail, ferry terminals, streetcar

¼ mile to bus rapid transit

Countywide Growth Center

Designated through a countywide process to serve as compact, mixed-use development within a city or unincorporated urban area. These areas are a local planning and investment priority and transportation options.

Countywide Industrial Center

Designated through a countywide process to serve as important local industrial areas within a city or unincorporated urban area. These areas are a local planning and investment priority to support industrial sector employment.

Local Center

Locally identified areas that play an important role in the region and help define community character, provide local gathering places, serve as community hubs, and accommodate growth.

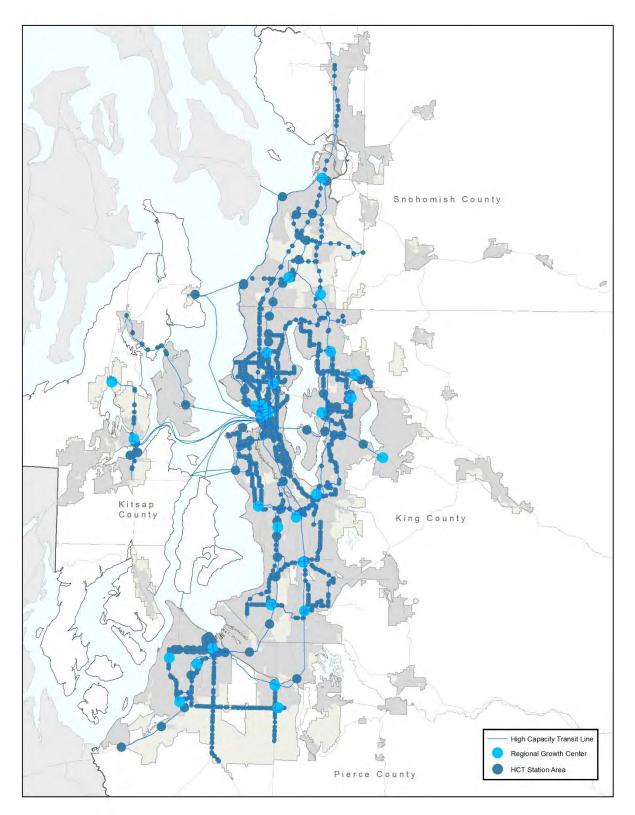**Figure 25 – Regional Growth and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers**

Figure 26 – Regional Growth Centers and High-Capacity Transit Station Areas

Snohomish County

Kitsap County

King County

Pierce County

High Capacity Transit Line
Regional Growth Center
HCT Station Area

Cities in Rural Areas

A number of freestanding incorporated cities surrounded by rural lands exist throughout the region. Under the Growth Management Act, these cities are part of the urban growth area and provide access to transportation, local services, and economic opportunity to residents in rural and unincorporated areas.

VISION 2050 calls for these communities to continue to be the primary places for meeting service needs – including shopping, jobs, and services – of both their residents and residents in nearby rural areas. Cities in rural areas are appropriate focal points for rural and resource-based industries and rural areas are typically best served by schools, institutions, and facilities located in adjacent cities and towns. Development patterns in these communities will reflect the size and scale appropriate for smaller towns and should continue to support their walkable town centers.

Annexation and Incorporation

Every county in the region has unincorporated land within its urban growth areas. The character of these areas ranges from lightly developed communities on the edge of the urban growth area to dense neighborhoods near major employment centers that are indistinguishable from surrounding incorporated jurisdictions. Some urban unincorporated areas will soon have access to high-capacity transit. As the Regional Growth Strategy prioritizes growth near high-capacity transit, these areas are more equipped to accommodate growth than other unincorporated areas without transit access.

The Growth Management Act states urban communities are best served by city governments that provide a complete array of urban services. Counties and cities have adopted policies and jointly planned areas to support the transfer of governance as land is annexed or incorporated. However, annexations and incorporations are complex, time-consuming, and expensive, and several barriers exist. Annexation methods in state law are cumbersome processes that do not guarantee success. All annexation and incorporation methods rely on community support, which can be difficult for cities to facilitate. Long-term cost implications derived from increased service costs and upgrades to infrastructure often deter cities from annexing whole communities.

This regional plan expects that by 2050 all urban area will be annexed into existing cities or incorporated as new cities, but also recognizes the challenges of this goal. PSRC, counties, and cities will continue to work together to address barriers to annexation and incorporation through supporting necessary changes to state annexation laws, opportunities for state and local incentives, and joint planning efforts.

Much of the unincorporated urban growth area has been identified by nearby cities for potential annexation. For large unincorporated communities, incorporation might be more viable. Counties are encouraged to work with residents to identify these areas and plan for their incorporation.

VISION 2050

Conserving Traditional Landscapes: Rural Areas and

Natural Resource Lands

The region's rural areas have distinct characteristics, just as the urban growth area does. Among the region's rural lands are areas with different ecological functions, parcel sizes, and uses. Rural areas provide opportunities for a lifestyle that makes a distinct contribution to the region's sustainability and economy. By focusing the majority of the region's growth inside the urban growth area, lands with rural character can be maintained for present and future generations.

Washington state law enables development to occur based on regulations in effect at the time that a building permit or land division application was submitted – a practice known as vesting. This can lead to situations where development approved before adoption of comprehensive plans under the Growth Management Act is not consistent with the law's planning goals or more recently adopted local plans. VISION 2050 advances tools and techniques to address the challenges of vesting in rural areas, such as conservation programs, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, and lot consolidation.

Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program

Recognizing the importance of rural areas to the region's economy and sustainability efforts, PSRC established the Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program to provide assistance to rural communities. The program uses financial incentives to bring together the interests of rural towns and transportation agencies to plan jointly for improvements in a manner that enhances the rural character of these communities.

VISION 2050 | Adopted October 2020

The region will continue conserving its natural resource lands by designating, maintaining, and enhancing the farm, forest, and mineral lands that sustain the environment and economy. These lands serve resource-based industries and are sources of food, wood products, sand, gravel, and minerals. These lands also provide ecosystem services, supporting wildlife habitat, open space, and groundwater recharge. Farms and forests can be viewed as renewable natural resources with the potential to produce food and wood fiber on an ongoing basis. The productivity of these lands can be compromised if they are overworked or polluted and is lost when resource lands are converted to other uses.

Beyond land use regulations, counties play a role in supporting the economic viability of agriculture and food production. Maintaining and expanding a healthy market for local food and forest products is essential to long-term preservation of these industries and lands. VISION 2050 seeks to permanently protect the region's key resource lands as places of continued environmental prosperity and economic viability.

Collaborating to Preserve and Enhance Important Uses

Innovative Techniques

A variety of land use tools support implementation of VISION 2050 and the Growth Management Act. The Growth Management Act encourages the use of innovative land use and development techniques, and VISION 2050 calls for counties and cities to encourage sustainable development practices that focus growth within the urban growth area, especially in centers and transit station areas. Local jurisdictions implement many regional policies through local ordinances, zoning codes, and development regulations. Cities and counties have adopted inclusionary zoning requirements, incentives for compact, pedestrian-oriented development, and other tools that enable communities to grow in sustainable, equitable, and healthy ways.

Industrial Lands

Local jurisdictions have been proactive in protecting industrial lands. Recognizing that industrial lands can result in negative impacts, such as noise, glare, increased traffic, and potential safety or health hazards, including exposure to harmful air emissions, cities and counties are concentrating these uses in industrial centers. Local codes limit uses within these industrial areas, which benefits not only the industries located in these areas but also protects the neighboring communities from harmful impacts. VISION 2050 calls for cities and counties to continue preserving industrial lands and limiting incompatible land uses in manufacturing/industrial centers. Encroachment of incompatible land uses around airports, particularly in the critical approach and departure paths, is a significant problem. Washington state law and VISION 2050 both call for the protection of general aviation airports.

Military Installations

Military installations play an important role in the region's economy, and local jurisdictions collaborate with the region's military installations to ensure growth is compatible with military activities and operations. This ensures the welfare, safety, and security of community members and military personnel. Limiting incompatible uses adjacent to military installations can take several forms, from adopting development guidelines that restrict height or land uses to analyzing how transportation impacts from new development affect military transportation routes. Washington state law and VISION 2050 seek continued protection of military installations from encroachment of incompatible land uses and development on adjacent land.

Supporting Growth Through Concurrency

State concurrency requirements underlie a fundamental premise of growth management – namely, that development should occur concurrent with where adequate facilities and infrastructure already exist or are to be provided in the near future. Local governments have a significant amount of flexibility in applying concurrency provisions. Cities, especially those with designated centers, benefit from tailoring their concurrency programs to set level-of-service and impact assessment expectations in the centers or downtown to optimize the use of existing facilities while meeting overall objectives for the urban environment.

Under the Growth Management Act, part of the concurrency requirement is the establishment of level-of-service standards for arterials, transit service, and other facilities. These standards are used to determine whether a proposed development can be served with available facilities, or whether mitigation of some sort may be required. The law requires cities and counties to have a reassessment strategy in the event of a service deficiency or shortfall. Such a strategy allows a jurisdiction to consider: (1) other sources of funding to provide the service, (2) changing the level-of-service standard that was established, and/or (3) reconsidering the land use assumptions.

Washington state law encourages handling transportation-related concurrency problems with solutions such as transit, walking or biking, system efficiencies, and transportation demand management. Improved coordination among the concurrency programs established by neighboring jurisdictions helps to address the cross-jurisdictional impacts of development and facility needs. Multimodal approaches to concurrency also support reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging a variety of mobility options. As the region's centers and compact communities continue to grow and evolve, future mobility solutions will require integrating multimodal forms of transportation into communities, including transit improvements and more complete bicycle and pedestrian facilities. VISION 2050 calls for addressing multimodal transportation options in concurrency programs and tailoring requirements in centers and subareas to support transit.

Development Patterns Policies

Building Urban Communities

MPP-DP-1

Develop high-quality, compact urban communities throughout the region's urban growth area that impart a sense of place, preserve local character, provide for mixed uses and choices in housing types, and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.

MPP-DP-2

Reduce disparities in access to opportunity for the region's residents through inclusive community planning and targeted public and private investments that meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses.

MPP-DP-3

Enhance existing neighborhoods to provide a high degree of connectivity in the street network to accommodate walking, bicycling, and transit use, and sufficient public spaces.

MPP-DP-4

Support the transformation of key underutilized lands, such as surplus public lands or environmentally contaminated lands, to higher-density, mixed-use areas to complement the development of centers and the enhancement of existing neighborhoods.

MPP-DP-5

Identify, protect and enhance those elements and characteristics that give the central Puget Sound region its identity, especially the natural visual resources and positive urban form elements.

MPP-DP-6

Preserve significant regional historic, visual, and cultural resources, including public views, landmarks, archaeological sites, historic and cultural landscapes, and areas of special character.

MPP-DP-7

Consider the potential impacts of development to culturally significant sites and tribal treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering grounds.

MPP-DP-8

Conduct inclusive engagement to identify and address the diverse needs of the region's residents.

MPP-DP-9

Support urban design, historic preservation, and arts to enhance quality of life, support local culture, improve the natural and human-made environments, promote health and well-being, contribute to a prosperous economy, and increase the region's resiliency in adapting to changes or adverse events.

MPP-DP-10

Design public buildings and spaces that contribute to a sense of community and a sense of place.

MPP-DP-11

Identify and create opportunities to develop parks, civic places (including schools) and public spaces, especially in or adjacent to centers.

MPP-DP-12

Design transportation projects and other infrastructure to achieve community development objectives and improve communities.

MPP-DP-13

Allow natural boundaries to help determine the routes and placement of infrastructure connections and improvements.

MPP-DP-14

Recognize and work with linear systems that cross jurisdictional boundaries – including natural systems, continuous land use patterns, and transportation and infrastructure systems – in community planning, development, and design.

Promoting Healthy Communities

MPP-DP-15

Design communities to provide safe and welcoming environments for walking and bicycling.

MPP-DP-16

Address and integrate health and well-being into appropriate regional, countywide, and local planning practices and decision-making processes.

MPP-DP-17

Promote cooperation and coordination among transportation providers, local government, and developers to ensure that joint- and mixed-use developments are designed to promote and improve physical, mental, and social health and reduce the impacts of climate change on the natural and built environments.

MPP-DP-18

Address existing health disparities and improve health outcomes in all communities.

MPP-DP-19

Develop and implement design guidelines to encourage construction of healthy buildings and facilities to promote healthy people.

MPP-DP-20

Support agricultural, farmland, and aquatic uses that enhance the food system in the central Puget Sound region and its capacity to produce fresh and minimally processed foods.

Centers: Supporting Connections to Opportunity

MPP-DP-21

Provide a regional framework for designating and evaluating regional growth centers.

MPP-DP-22

Plan for densities that maximize benefits of transit investments in high-capacity transit station areas that are expected to attract significant new population or employment growth.

MPP-DP-23

Evaluate planning in regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas for their potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of marginalized residents and businesses. Use a range of strategies to mitigate displacement impacts.

MPP-DP-24

Provide a regional framework for designating and evaluating regional manufacturing/industrial centers.

MPP-DP-25

Support the development of centers within all jurisdictions, including high-capacity transit station areas and countywide and local centers.

MPP-DP-26

Implement the adopted framework to designate countywide centers to ensure compatibility within the region.

Annexation and Incorporation

MPP-DP-27

Affiliate all urban unincorporated lands appropriate for annexation with an adjacent city or identify those that may be feasible for incorporation. To fulfill the Regional Growth Strategy, while promoting economical administration and services, annexation is preferred over incorporation.

MPP-DP-28

Support joint planning between cities, counties, and service providers to work cooperatively in planning for urban unincorporated areas to ensure an orderly transition to city governance, including efforts such as: (a) establishing urban development standards, (b) addressing service and infrastructure financing, and (c) transferring permitting authority.

MPP-DP-29

Support annexation and incorporation in urban unincorporated areas by planning for phased growth of communities to be economically viable, supported by the urban infrastructure, and served by public transit.

MPP-DP-30

Support the provision and coordination of urban services to unincorporated urban areas by the adjacent city or, where appropriate, by the county or an existing utility district as an interim approach.

Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands

MPP-DP-31

Promote transit service to and from existing cities in rural areas.

MPP-DP-32

Contribute to improved ecological functions and more appropriate use of rural lands by minimizing impacts through innovative and environmentally sensitive land use management and development practices.

MPP-DP-33

Do not allow urban net densities in rural and resource areas.

MPP-DP-34

Avoid new fully contained communities outside of the designated urban growth area because of their potential to create sprawl and undermine state and regional growth management goals.

MPP-DP-35

In the event that a proposal is made for creating a new fully contained community, the county shall make the proposal available to other counties and to the Regional Council for advance review and comment on regional impacts.

MPP-DP-36

Use existing and new tools and strategies to address vested development to ensure that future growth meets existing permitting and development standards and prevents further fragmentation of rural lands.

VISION 2050

MPP-DP-37

Ensure that development occurring in rural areas is rural in character and is focused into communities and activity areas.

MPP-DP-38

Maintain the long-term viability of permanent rural land by avoiding the construction of new highways and major roads in rural areas.

MPP-DP-39

Support long-term solutions for the environmental and economic sustainability of agriculture and forestry within rural areas.

MPP-DP-40

Protect and enhance significant open spaces, natural resources, and critical areas.

MPP-DP-41

Establish best management practices that protect the long-term integrity of the natural environment, adjacent land uses, and the long-term productivity of resource lands.

MPP-DP-42

Support the sustainability of designated resource lands. Do not convert these lands to other uses.

MPP-DP-43

Ensure that resource lands and their related economic activities are not adversely impacted by development on adjacent non-resource lands.

MPP-DP-44

Work to conserve valuable rural and resource lands through techniques, such as conservation programs, transfer of development rights, and the purchase of development rights. Focus growth within the urban growth area, especially cities, to lessen pressures to convert rural and resource areas to residential uses.

MPP-DP-45

Avoid growth in rural areas that cannot be sufficiently served by roads, utilities, and services at rural levels of service.

Collaborating to Preserve and Enhance Important Uses

MPP-DP-46

Support and provide incentives to increase the percentage of new development and redevelopment–both public and private–to be built at higher-performing energy and environmental standards.

MPP-DP-47

Streamline development standards and regulations for residential and commercial development and public projects, especially in centers and high-capacity transit station areas, to provide flexibility and to accommodate a broader range of project types consistent with the regional vision.

MPP-DP-48

Protect the continued operation of general aviation airports from encroachment by incompatible uses and development on adjacent land.

MPP-DP-49

Protect military lands from encroachment by incompatible uses and development on adjacent land.

MPP-DP-50

Protect industrial zoning and manufacturing/industrial centers from encroachment by incompatible uses and development on adjacent land.

MPP-DP-51

Protect tribal reservation lands from encroachment by incompatible land uses and development both within reservation boundaries and on adjacent land.

Supporting Growth Through Concurrency

MPP-DP-52

Develop, implement, and evaluate concurrency programs and methods that fully consider growth targets, service needs, and level-of-service standards. Focus level-of-service standards for transportation on the movement of people and goods instead of only on the movement of vehicles.

MPP-DP-53

Address nonmotorized, pedestrian, and other multimodal types of transportation options in concurrency programs – both in assessment and mitigation.

MPP-DP-54

Tailor concurrency programs for centers and other subareas to encourage development that can be supported by transit.

Development Patterns Actions

Regional Actions

DP-Action-1

Implement the Regional Centers Framework: PSRC will study and evaluate existing regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers to assess their designation, distribution, interrelationships, characteristics, transportation efficiency, performance, and social equity. PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions and countywide planning bodies, will work to establish a common network of countywide centers.

DP-Action-2

Industrial Lands: PSRC will update its inventory of industrial lands, evaluate supply and demand for industrial land across all industry sectors, research trends for industrial uses as technology and markets evolve, and identify strategies to preserve, protect, and enhance industrial lands, jobs, and businesses in the region in coordination with jurisdictions' efforts to support their industrial land base. In 2021, PSRC will convene a working group to review policy related to preserving industrial lands and employment.

DP-Action-3

Transit-Oriented Development: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will support member jurisdiction in the implementation of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy and compact, equitable development around high-capacity transit station areas. This action will include highlighting and promoting tools used to support equitable development in high-capacity transit station areas.

DP-Action-4

Densities in Transit Station Areas: PSRC will work in collaboration with transit agencies and local government to develop guidance for transit-supportive densities in different types of high-capacity transit station areas.

DP-Action-5

Concurrency Best Practices: PSRC will continue to develop guidance on innovative approaches to multimodal level-of-service standards and regional and local implementation strategies for local multimodal concurrency. PSRC, in coordination with member jurisdictions and WSDOT, will identify approaches in which local concurrency programs fully address growth targets, service needs, and level-of-service standards for state highways. PSRC will communicate to the Legislature the need for state highways to be addressed in local concurrency programs.

DP-Action-6

Coordinated Planning in Unincorporated Urban Areas: PSRC will support communication with the state Legislature regarding necessary changes to state laws that hinder progress towards annexation and incorporation and opportunities for state and local incentives, organize forums to highlight annexation, incorporation, and joint planning best practices, and provide other resources that address the barriers to joint planning, annexation, and incorporation.

Local Actions

DP-Action-7

Identification and Clean-Up of Underused Lands: Local governments, in cooperation with state and/or federal regulatory agencies, will develop strategies for cleaning up brownfield and contaminated sites. Local jurisdictions should identify underused lands (such as environmentally contaminated land and surplus public lands) for future redevelopment or reuse.

DP-Action-8

Center Plans and Station Area Plans: Each city or county with a designated regional center and/or light rail transit station area will develop a subarea plan for the designated regional growth center, station area(s), and/or manufacturing/industrial center. Cities and counties will plan for other forms of high-capacity transit stations, such as bus rapid transit and commuter rail, and countywide and local centers, through local comprehensive plans, subarea plans, neighborhood plans, or other planning tools. Jurisdictions may consider grouping station areas that are located in close proximity.

DP-Action-9

Mode Split Goals for Centers: Each city with a designated regional growth center and/or manufacturing/industrial center will establish mode split goals for these centers and identify strategies to encourage transportation demand management and alternatives to driving alone.

Housing

Goal: *The region preserves, improves, and expands its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident. The region continues to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.*

Housing is a basic need for every individual. Yet, residents in many communities in the region are facing an unprecedented challenge in finding and keeping a home that they can afford. The central Puget Sound region is expected to grow by an additional 1.8 million residents and 830,000 households by the year 2050. Simply put, the region needs more housing of varied types in all communities. Meeting the housing needs of all households at a range of income levels is integral to promoting health and well-being and creating a region that is livable for all residents, economically prosperous, and environmentally sustainable.

Housing affordability continues to be a major challenge for the region. The housing market has experienced great highs and lows that have benefitted some and created and exacerbated hardship and inequalities for others. Following the precipitous drop in housing prices and foreclosures of the recession, the region's economic upswing and strong job growth in the 2010s have fueled dramatic increases in rents and home prices. Despite job losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting financial impact on many households, home prices have continued to increase in the region. Some may have been able to take advantage of historically low mortgage interest rates or lower rents, while others are in a challenging position due to loss of income and face the potential of eviction or foreclosure. A potentially imbalanced recovery may further the threat of displacement of low-income households and people of color. As a result, housing costs are a greater burden for many households today than a decade ago, leaving less for other basic needs and amenities. Renters, and renters of color in particular, face a considerable shortage of affordable housing opportunities. And these households are often the most at risk of losing their housing and experiencing homelessness.

A primary goal of the Growth Management Act is to make housing affordable to "all economic segments of the population," providing a variety of residential densities and housing types and encouraging preservation of existing housing stock. Local governments are required to plan for housing that meets the varied needs of their diverse communities and residents and to ensure they are providing sufficient residential zoned land capacity for housing to accommodate 20-year growth targets.

VISION 2050's housing policies respond to the urgency of changing demographics and the need to increase and diversify the region's housing supply. They identify coordinated strategies, policies, and actions to ensure that the region's housing needs are met.

A Regional Challenge

The complexity of addressing the full range of housing needs and challenges requires a coordinated regional-local approach. A coordinated, regionwide effort to build and preserve housing accessible to all residents is not just about housing. It is also about building healthy, complete, and welcoming communities where all families and people, regardless of income, race, family size or need, are able to live near good schools, transit, employment opportunities, and open space.

Through the Regional Growth Strategy, the region has articulated a preferred pattern of urbanization that will help direct new housing development to the urban growth area and designated growth centers while preserving industrial lands. Focusing housing in urban areas, specifically centers and station areas, supports and leverages the region's ongoing prioritization of infrastructure investment in central urban places. To assist counties and cities, PSRC serves as a forum for setting regional priorities and facilitating coordination among its member jurisdictions and housing interest groups.

Through data, guidance, and technical assistance, PSRC encourages jurisdictions to adopt best housing practices and establish coordinated local housing and affordable housing targets. PSRC supports jurisdictions in their development of effective local housing elements, strategies, and implementation plans. Housing data and information tracking the success of various housing efforts are monitored and reported regionally at PSRC.

The Need for Local Action

Local governments play a critical role in housing, including its production and preservation. Local governments possess regulatory control over land use and development. They are key players, both individually and in cooperation with other housing interests, in stimulating various types of development activity through zoning, incentives, and funding, streamlined development review and permitting processes.

Local Housing Responsibilities Under the Growth Management Act

Local housing elements should ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods and include the following components:

1. an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs,
2. goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing,
3. identification of sufficient land for a range of housing types to match community needs, and
4. adequate provisions for the needs of all economic segments of the community.

(RCW 36.70A.070)

There are numerous tools and strategies available to local governments to encourage housing diversity and promote affordable housing. Many of these tools can be applied in a manner that is tailored to and respectful of local market conditions, community characteristics, and the vision for growth embodied in local comprehensive plans. Since VISION 2040 was adopted in 2008, housing planning and implementation has advanced through the ongoing work of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations. These efforts have yielded new resources, promoted best practices, established community-based housing strategies, and coordinated efforts across multiple jurisdictions.

Housing Choices to Reflect Changing Demographics

The characteristics of the region's households have been changing over time and will continue to do so. The size of the average household has been decreasing. Fewer people are living in family households with two parents and children. More households are comprised of singles, couples without children, or single-parent families. Many households have two or more workers. The region's population is becoming far more racially and ethnically diverse. As the population ages and new generations enter the housing market, there will be demands and preferences for new and different types of housing. While the region has a changing population with a wide range of housing needs, the vast majority of owner-occupied homes are larger single-family homes.
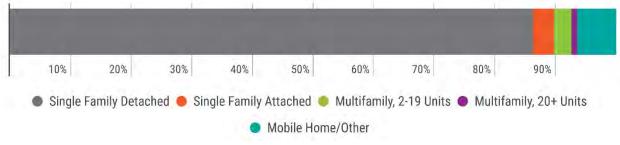
Figure 27 – Ownership Housing Stock by Housing Type, Central Puget Sound Region

Source: 2017 American Community Survey

Moderate density housing, ranging from duplexes to townhomes to garden apartments, bridge a gap between single-family housing and more intense multifamily and commercial areas and provide opportunities for housing types that are inclusive to people of different ages, life stages, and income ranges. Regional and local tools can help to promote and incentivize the development and preservation of more moderate density housing to give people greater housing choices, and produce urban densities that support walkable communities, local retail and commercial services, and efficient public transit.

Affordability

The region continues to experience an affordability crisis. Rising housing costs can be particularly devastating for low-income renters, particularly renters of color, many who pay more than 50% of their income on housing. Many middle- and lower-income households struggle to find housing that fits their income in an increasingly competitive and expensive housing market due, in part, to zoning practices that have prevented the development of more affordable, smaller homes, and apartments. Home ownership may seem like less of a reality for potential first-time buyers as home prices continue to climb. This is especially true for people of color, who have been historically excluded from homeownership opportunities.

The central Puget Sound region's housing landscape reflects more than market forces and conditions. It is also the product of decades of public policies and private practices that, throughout the 20th century, often excluded lower income households and immigrant communities, and prevented people of color from accessing housing and living in certain areas. Past and current housing practices have perpetuated substantial inequities in wealth, ownership, and opportunity, and they continue to create barriers to rectifying these conditions. Regional housing work is approached with an awareness of this legacy and of the comprehensive work needed to redress it.

Low- to middle-wage workers – such as teachers, health care professionals, retail workers, administrative personnel, police officers, and firefighters – who are essential to the economic and social vitality of a community, often cannot afford to live in the places where they work. As affordable housing options become scarce, households are forced to move farther from their jobs and communities, resulting in increased traffic congestion and transportation costs and fragmentation of communities. This spatial mismatch also leads to an inability of certain segments of the labor market to fill positions.

Affordable Housing is commonly defined in terms of housing costs as a percentage of household income. Housing is considered unaffordable when a household's monthly housing costs exceed a certain threshold – most commonly 30% of gross income – thereby reducing the budget available for basic necessities.

Housing Affordability refers to the balance (or imbalance) between incomes and housing costs within a community or region. A common measurement compares the number of households in certain income categories to the number of units in the market that are affordable at 30% of gross income.

Providing housing affordable to households earning different incomes requires different approaches. To craft effective strategies, it is imperative to understand the types and cost of housing needed in a community relative to the supply of housing available to households at each income level. Over one-third of households in the region earn less than 80% area median income (AMI). Ideally, the supply of housing affordable to moderate and low-income households should mirror the number of households at those income levels. The current distribution of households in the region is:

- 18% of households earn 50-80% AMI (Moderate Income)
- 12% of households earn 30-50% AMI (Low Income)
- 13% of households earn less than 30% AMI (Very Low Income)

Providing affordable units for very low-income residents and providing housing options for residents experiencing homelessness cannot be fully addressed by the private market alone. Public intervention is necessary to ensure housing units are affordable to households at the lowest income levels now and in the future.

Figure 28 – Lower Housing Costs Require Greater Public Intervention

Anticipated Households in the Region in 2050

198,979 11%	179,674 10%	290,404 17%	391,530 22%	708,252 40%

AMI: Area Median Income.

Source: 2016 ACS 1-Year PUMS

While the current housing production rate in 2017 meets the average annual need in the region, the market has yet to make up for the slow growth in the years directly following the recession resulting in a supply and demand imbalance. Increasing the supply of housing throughout the region and providing a variety of housing types and densities for both renters and owners will help the region meet its housing goals. Special emphasis is placed on providing affordable housing for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households across the region, with a focus on promoting housing opportunities near transit, and appropriate housing for special needs populations. VISION 2050 also encourages more homeownership opportunities for low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income households and acknowledges historic and current inequities in access to homeownership opportunities for people of color and how this long history of exclusion and discrimination has prevented communities of color from accessing housing, ownership, and opportunity.

Focusing Housing Near Transit Options

Within the central Puget Sound region, jurisdictions are planning for housing and job growth in places designated for higher densities, a mix of land uses, and transportation choices. Communities across the region are realizing these aims by encouraging infill, redevelopment, and more compact development, especially in designated regional growth centers and around transit stations. However, rents and home prices are rising quickly, making it often challenging to find affordable housing close to jobs.
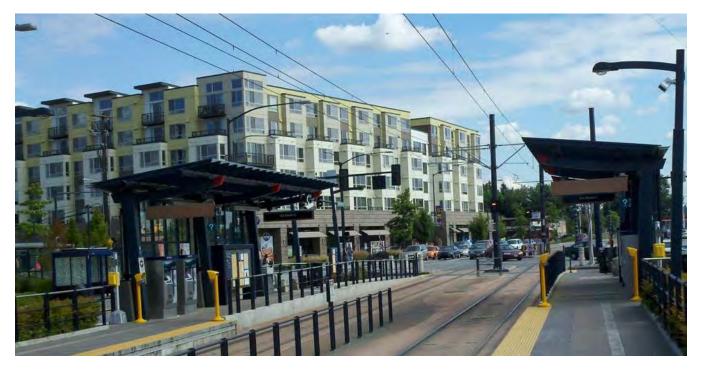
The region's continuing expansion of high-capacity transit provides one of the best opportunities to expand accessible housing options to a wider range of incomes. Promoting or requiring affordable housing in walking distance – about ¼ to ½ mile—from high-capacity transit stations and in regional growth centers can help to ensure all residents have opportunities to live in accessible and connected communities. Such housing will be particularly valuable to low-income households, who are the most dependent on transit and are at risk for displacement as housing costs rise.

Displacement and Community Stability

Displacement occurs when housing or neighborhood conditions force residents to move. Displacement can be physical, when building conditions deteriorate or are taken off the market for renovation or demolition, or economic, as costs rise. Many communities in the central Puget Sound region, like the Central District in Seattle and the Hilltop neighborhood in Tacoma, have documented displacement. Once physical and economic displacement occur, the social and cultural composition of the neighborhood will be disrupted, thus affecting the cohesion and stability of a community and the well-being of local residents and businesses.

Several key factors can drive displacement: proximity to rail stations, proximity to job centers, historic housing stock, and location in a strong real estate market. Displacement is a regional concern as it is inherently linked to shifts in the regional housing and job market. Many of these factors put communities of color and neighborhoods with high concentrations of renters at a higher risk of displacement.

VISION 2050

Regional growth centers and communities near transit are home to more people of color and higher concentrations of poverty than the region as a whole. As these central places connected by transit continue to grow and develop, residents and businesses who contribute to these communities should have the option to remain and thrive and take advantage of new amenities and services.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Jobs-housing balance is a planning concept which advocates that housing and employment be close together, with an emphasis on matching housing options with nearby jobs, to reduce the length of commute travel and number of vehicle trips. A lack of housing, especially affordable housing close to job centers, will continue to push demand for affordable homes to more distant areas, increasing commute times and the percentage of household income spent on transportation costs. Housing policies encourage adding housing opportunities to job-rich places. It is imperative that there are a variety of housing choices available to a variety of incomes in proximity to job centers to provide opportunities for residents to live close to where they work regardless of their income. Policies in the Economy chapter promote economic development to bring jobs to all four counties. Policies are also located in the Regional Growth Strategy chapter related to balancing jobs and housing growth.

Housing Policies

MPP-H-1

Plan for housing supply, forms, and densities to meet the region's current and projected needs consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and to make significant progress towards jobs/housing balance.

MPP-H-2

Provide a range of housing types and choices to meet the housing needs of all income levels and demographic groups within the region.

MPP-H-3

Achieve and sustain – through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development – a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of low-income, moderate-income, middle-income, and special needs individuals and households that is equitably and rationally distributed throughout the region.

MPP-H-4

Address the need for housing affordable to low- and very low-income households, recognizing that these critical needs will require significant public intervention through funding, collaboration, and jurisdictional action.

MPP-H-5

Promote homeownership opportunities for low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income families and individuals while recognizing historic inequities in access to homeownership opportunities for communities of color.

MPP-H-6

Develop and provide a range of housing choices for workers at all income levels throughout the region that is accessible to job centers and attainable to workers at anticipated wages.

MPP-H-7

Expand the supply and range of housing at densities to maximize the benefits of transit investments, including affordable units, in growth centers and station areas throughout the region.

MPP-H-8

Promote the development and preservation of long-term affordable housing options in walking distance to transit by implementing zoning, regulations, and incentives.

MPP-H-9

Expand housing capacity for moderate density housing to bridge the gap between single-family and more intensive multifamily development and provide opportunities for more affordable ownership and rental housing that allows more people to live in neighborhoods across the region.

VISION 2050

MPP-H-10

Encourage jurisdictions to review and streamline development standards and regulations to advance their public benefit, provide flexibility, and minimize additional costs to housing.

MPP-H-11

Encourage interjurisdictional cooperative efforts and public-private partnerships to advance the provision of affordable and special needs housing.

MPP-H-12

Identify potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of low-income households and marginalized populations that may result from planning, public investments, private redevelopment, and market pressure. Use a range of strategies to mitigate displacement impacts to the extent feasible.

Housing Actions

Regional Actions

H-Action-1

Regional Housing Strategy: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, state agencies, housing interest groups, housing professionals, advocacy and community groups, and other stakeholders will develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy to support the 2024 local comprehensive plan update. The housing strategy will provide the framework for regional housing assistance (see H-Action-2, below) and shall include the following components:

- In the near term, a regional housing needs assessment to identify current and future housing needs to support the regional vision and to make significant progress towards jobs/housing balance and quantify the need for affordable housing that will eliminate cost burden and racial disproportionality in cost burden for all economic segments of the population, including those earning at or below 80 percent of Area Median Income throughout the region. This will provide necessary structure and focus to regional affordable housing discussions

- Strategies and best practices to promote and accelerate: housing supply, the preservation and expansion of market rate and subsidized affordable housing, housing in centers and in proximity to transit, jobs-housing balance, and the development of moderate-density housing options

- Coordination with other regional and local housing efforts

H-Action-2

Regional Housing Assistance: PSRC, in coordination with subregional, county, and local housing efforts, will assist implementation of regional housing policy and local jurisdiction and agency work. Assistance shall include the following components:

- Guidance for developing local housing targets (including affordable housing targets), model housing policies, and best housing practices
- Technical assistance, including new and strengthened tools, to support local jurisdictions in developing effective housing strategies, action plans, and programs
- Collection and analysis of regional housing data, including types and uses of housing and effectiveness of zoning, regulations, and incentives to achieve desired outcomes
- Technical assistance in support of effective local actions to address displacement, including data on displacement risk and a toolbox of local policies and actions

H-Action-3

State Support and Coordination: PSRC will monitor and support as appropriate members' efforts to seek new funding and legislative support for housing; and will coordinate with state agencies to implement regional housing policy.

Local Actions

H-Action-4

Local Housing Needs: Counties and cities will conduct a housing needs analysis and evaluate the effectiveness of local housing policies and strategies to achieve housing targets and affordability goals to support updates to local comprehensive plans. Analysis of housing opportunities with access to jobs and transportation options will aid review of total household costs.

H-Action-5

Affordable Housing Incentives: As counties and cities plan for and create additional housing capacity consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, evaluate and adopt techniques such as inclusionary or incentive zoning to provide affordability.

H-Action-6

Displacement: Metropolitan Cities, Core Cities, and High Capacity Transit Communities will develop and implement strategies to address displacement in conjunction with the populations identified of being at risk of displacement including residents and neighborhood-based small business owners.

H-Action-7

Housing Choice: Counties and cities will update regulations and strategies to reduce barriers to the development and preservation of moderate density housing to address the need for housing between single-family and more intensive multifamily development, consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

VISION 2050

H-Action-8

Housing Production: Counties and cities will review and amend, where appropriate and consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, development standards and regulations to reduce barriers to the development of housing by providing flexibility and minimizing additional costs.

Economy

Goal: *The region has a prospering and sustainable regional economy by supporting businesses and job creation, investing in all people and their health, sustaining environmental quality, and creating great central places, diverse communities, and high quality of life.*

A healthy economy is vital to creating and maintaining a high standard of living and quality of life for residents in the central Puget Sound region. To create stable and lasting prosperity, VISION 2050 focuses on businesses, people, and places. Strong regional growth necessitates continuous coordination to ensure that the region's quality of life remains an economic asset in the future. Success of the region's economy is built on quality of life policies across VISION 2050 that manage the region's growth, invest in transportation, protect the environment, enhance community assets, and provide housing options for the region's residents. Economy policies in VISION 2050 build on these policies.

A healthy economy provides good jobs and opportunity. It pays for vital public services such as education, social services, criminal justice, transportation, environmental preservation, and the opportunity to purchase affordable housing. It allows the region to support the arts and cultural institutions, maintain parks, and build strong communities. A healthy economy permits residents to provide for their families and access health care. It enables the region to care for those who are vulnerable, to protect the environment, and to preserve the quality of life that makes the region such a special place.
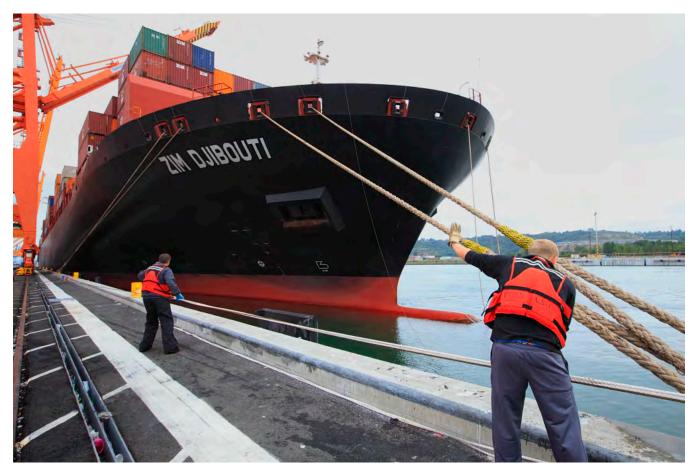
The region's outstanding natural environment is a key element for economic progress. Abundant natural resources, a beautiful setting, and vibrant communities make every industry more competitive in a global economy. Maintaining this advantage depends on a healthy built and natural environment – with clean industries, jobs with good incomes, managed growth, and lively centers.

It has never been more clear that public health and the economy are mutually supportive. The economy relies on a healthy workforce and people's health depends on a thriving economy to provide personal financial stability to afford a high quality of life. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment claims surged in the central Puget Sound region. However, some residents are more negatively impacted than others. People of color in the region are more likely to have contracted COVID-19 and are also more likely to file for unemployment due to economic shutdowns. This is a consequence of historic inequities that drive where people live, the educational and economic opportunities they have, disparities in criminal justice outcomes, their health outcomes, and their ability to transfer wealth across generations. Systemic racism has laid the groundwork for people of color to be overrepresented in low-wage jobs hit hardest by the pandemic, such as food services, retail, and transportation. These factors have funneled people of color into communities that have eroded their health and into jobs lacking healthcare, making them particularly vulnerable to the virus and further delaying the economic recovery.

While the region has benefited from one of the country's strongest local economies, not all parts of the region have benefitted equally. Jobs in the information, technical, and management sectors pay the highest average wages and saw some of the largest increases in jobs and wages since 2010. Nearly all this job growth in the region has been concentrated in a few urban areas. VISION 2050 calls for a better balance of equitable job creation among the counties to broaden opportunity and create a better jobs-housing balance.

In addition to the overall balance between jobs and housing, VISION 2050 also recognizes the importance to which the types and affordability of housing in an area are well matched to the income levels of locally available jobs. Lack of affordable housing can force lower wage workers to commute long distances.

Locally owned businesses, serving cultures and communities in the region, are key assets to the region's economy. Rising real estate costs caused by strong population and job growth have threatened to price out these important businesses, and COVID-19 impacts have been especially damaging for many small businesses. VISION 2050 calls for the preservation of these community economic assets and the mitigation of their displacement.

Roles in Implementation

Sustaining the regional economy requires coordination across the public and private sectors. The region's economic strategy, Amazing Place, is the blueprint for this coordination. Amazing Place is a data-driven regional economic strategy that identifies leading sectors and the ways the region intends to sustain economic development.

The strategy has three goals:

1. Open economic opportunities to everyone
2. Compete globally
3. Sustain a high quality of life

Each goal is supported by specific strategies and initiatives to sustain and grow jobs throughout the region, for all residents. The strategy emphasizes traditional economic development priorities such as transportation, education, international trade, and the region's business climate. Newer emphasis areas include a specific rural strategy, initiatives to grow jobs throughout the region, and advancing social equity and affordable housing.

PSRC supports economic development in local municipalities through technical assistance and economic data, serving as a regional forum, and implementing Amazing Place with regional stakeholders.

Cities and counties work to set the stage for economic development in their communities, including local zoning, housing, and transportation planning and implementation. Local governments provide programs to attract and retain employers, understand the needs of small and large employers, and support marketing of local businesses. Local planning for downtowns, industrial areas, and other types of centers helps businesses benefit from co-location with other businesses and services.

Regional economic success also depends on a large ecosystem of organizations, including an education and workforce development system that goes beyond local and regional boundaries.

Ultimately, the private sector makes siting decisions for new jobs and investments, choosing which regions to invest in and in which communities to open employment locations. These siting decisions are facilitated at the state, county, and local levels through a network of organizations that assist in the recruitment, retention, and expansion of businesses in the region.

The Region's Economy

The central Puget Sound region is home to a diverse and growing economy. Forecasts show that the region will add 1.2 million jobs by 2050, growing to 3.4 million. Key export-focused industries that make the region unique include aerospace, information and communication technology, maritime, military and defense, life sciences and global health, clean technology, tourism, transportation and logistics, and business services. Washington's economy depends on trade – and the central Puget Sound region is vital to the state's trade activity. It is estimated that more than 40% of jobs in the state are tied to international trade. The region is home to many internationally known and successful companies such as Amazon, Boeing, Costco, Microsoft, Paccar, Starbucks, and Weyerhaeuser, and to the largest philanthropic organization in the world, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The region's internationally competitive ports and the state's natural resources make information technology, aerospace, and agricultural products major international exports. Military installations and defense companies are major employers in the region, particularly in Pierce and Kitsap counties.

Figure 29 – Central Puget Sound Region Employment and Forecast by Sector

Sector	Base year 2018	Growth 2018-2050
Government/Education	319,703	68,229
Professional & Business Services	309,818	373,040
Health	243,883	99,345
Retail	237,522	141,395
Manufacturing	188,863	-25,678
Wholesale, Trade, Utilties	160,581	44,365
Construction/Resource	122,764	19,328
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	102,375	34,191
Information	112,793	99,657
Other Services	328,482	183,785

Source: PSRC Macroeconomic Forecast – Wage & Salary Employment Estimates

The region's industrial lands, military installations, and maritime sites are assets that make significant contributions to the overall economy. Proximity to Pacific Rim countries, deep water ports, major transportation corridors, and low-cost energy are among unique regional assets supporting these lands. Each of the region's designated manufacturing industrial centers is a significant contributor to prosperity and growth and offers space and assets for further development.

With projected population and job growth, the region will be challenged to preserve and protect the long-term viability of these lands from incompatible uses and encroachment. Overall employment on these lands may decrease due to automation and advances in technology, or changes to distribution or warehousing uses. However, these same factors are increasing the economic productivity on these sites, which contribute to regional manufacturing supply chains, national military missions, and an international goods movement. Preservation of these lands support the region's existing industries as well as offering sites for new economic opportunity for manufacturing and advanced technology uses.

VISION 2050

Thriving Communities for People and Businesses

The region's outstanding quality of life, stunning natural setting, and healthy environment are distinctive attributes that set it apart when compared to most global competitors. These qualities help to attract and retain a highly talented and innovative workforce that drives global innovation.

VISION 2050 recognizes the importance of employment in cities and towns in rural areas and resource-based economic activity. Targeted efforts are needed to support jobs in industries compatible with rural communities, at a size, scale, and type that are compatible with the long-term integrity, productivity, and character of these areas.

The movement of people and goods throughout the region is crucial to the continued success of the economy and for growth of jobs and businesses. VISION 2050 calls for a transportation system that connects the region's centers and supports the economy through the movement of people and freight throughout the region.

Industrial lands, military installations, airports, seaports, and other maritime sites are assets that make significant contributions to the overall economy. Proximity to Pacific Rim countries, deep water ports, major transportation corridors, and low-cost energy are among the unique regional assets supporting these lands. VISION 2050 calls for the protection and preservation of these lands from incompatible use and encroachment.

Economic Opportunity

VISION 2050 underscores investment in all the region's people to create shared prosperity and to sustain a diversity of living-wage jobs. VISION 2050 responds to the changing reality of the global economy by placing people at the center of a prosperous region and promoting equitable access to opportunity for all the region's residents.

The new economy relies on a highly skilled and diverse population to stimulate creative and innovative enterprise, as well as local-serving employment in retail, health care, and other services. Investing in people means ensuring accessible and high-quality education and skills-training programs, developing social capital and community assets and fostering economic opportunities across the region.

VISION 2050 calls for supporting our culturally and ethnically diverse communities, including the region's tribes. It seeks to address the unique obstacles and special needs of the region's economically disadvantaged populations, as well as the assets and contributions they bring or have the potential to bring to the region's prosperity.

A Strong Business Climate

Industry clusters are concentrated sets of competing and complementary businesses that create wealth in a region by selling products or services to outside markets, generating income that fuels the rest of the economy.

Numerous factors affect the region's business climate, and the public sector plays a key role through planning and making investments that capitalize on natural and place-based assets. This is consistent with growth management and transportation objectives, and recognizes the important role that the private, public, and nonprofit sectors play in fostering environmental and social sustainability.

Economy Policies

MPP-EC-1

Support economic development activities that help to recruit, retain, expand, or diversify the region's businesses, targeted towards businesses that provide living-wage jobs.

MPP-EC-2

Foster a positive business climate by encouraging regionwide and statewide collaboration among business, government, utilities, education, labor, military, workforce development, and other nonprofit organizations.

MPP-EC-3

Support efforts to retain and expand industry clusters that manufacture goods and provide services for export, increasing capital in the region.

MPP-EC-4

Leverage the region's position as an international gateway by supporting businesses, airports, seaports, and agencies involved in trade-related activities.

MPP-EC-5

Recognize the region's airports as critical economic assets that support the region's businesses, commercial aviation activities, aerospace manufacturing, general aviation, and military missions.

MPP-EC-6

Ensure the efficient flow of people, goods, services, and information in and through the region with infrastructure investments, particularly in and connecting designated centers, to meet the needs of the regional economy.

MPP-EC-7

Foster a supportive environment for business startups, small businesses, locally owned and women- and minority-owned businesses to help them continue to prosper.

MPP-EC-8

Encourage the private, public, and nonprofit sectors to incorporate environmental and social responsibility into their practices.

MPP-EC-9

Promote economic activity and employment growth that creates widely shared prosperity and sustains a diversity of living-wage jobs for the region's residents.

MPP-EC-10

Ensure that the region has a high-quality education system that is accessible to all of the region's residents.

MPP-EC-11

Ensure that the region has high-quality and accessible training programs that give people opportunities to learn, maintain, and upgrade skills necessary to meet the current and forecast needs of the regional and global economy.

MPP-EC-12

Identify potential physical, economic, and cultural displacement of existing businesses that may result from redevelopment and market pressure. Use a range of strategies to mitigate displacement impacts to the extent feasible.

MPP-EC-13

Promote equity and access to opportunity in economic development policies and programs. Expand employment opportunity to improve the region's shared economic future.

MPP-EC-14

Foster appropriate and targeted economic growth in areas with low and very low access to opportunity to improve access to opportunity for current and future residents of these areas.

MPP-EC-15

Support and recognize the contributions of the region's culturally and ethnically diverse communities and Native Tribes, including helping the region continue to expand its international economy.

MPP-EC-16

Ensure that economic development sustains and respects the region's environment and encourages development of established and emerging industries, technologies, and services that promote environmental sustainability, especially those addressing climate change and resilience.

MPP-EC-17

Preserve and enhance the region's unique attributes and each community's distinctive identity and design as economic assets as the region grows.

MPP-EC-18

Develop and provide a range of job opportunities throughout the region to create a much closer balance and match between jobs and housing.

MPP-EC-19

Support economic activity and job creation in cities in the rural areas at a size, scale, and type compatible with these communities.

MPP-EC-20

Sustain and enhance arts and cultural institutions to foster an active and vibrant community life in every part of the region.

VISION 2050

MPP-EC-21

Concentrate a significant amount of economic growth in designated centers and connect them to each other in order to strengthen the region's economy and communities and to promote economic opportunity.

MPP-EC-22

Maximize the use of existing designated manufacturing/industrial centers by focusing appropriate types and amounts of employment growth in these areas and by protecting them from incompatible adjacent uses.

MPP-EC-23

Support economic activity in rural and natural resource areas at a size and scale that is compatible with the long-term integrity and productivity of these lands.

Economy Actions

Regional Actions

Ec-Action-1

Regional Economic Strategy: PSRC and the Economic Development District will coordinate economic development efforts to strengthen the region's industries, economic foundations and to implement the Regional Economic Strategy. Update the Regional Economic Strategy periodically.

Ec-Action-2

Regional Support for Local Government Economic Development Planning: PSRC will support county and local jurisdictions through technical assistance and economic data with special emphasis on smaller jurisdictions, in their efforts to development economic development elements as part of their expected 2024 comprehensive plan updates to support the Regional Growth Strategy. PSRC will also provide guidance on local planning to address commercial displacement.

Ec-Action-3

Regional Economic Data: PSRC and the Economic Development District, in collaboration with county economic development councils and other partners, will maintain regional economic data and develop regionwide and subarea forecasts.

Ec-Action-4

Job Growth Distribution: Identify regional roles in achieving the desired allocation of new jobs as reflected in the Regional Growth Strategy.

Local Action

Ec-Action-5

Economic Development Elements: Cities and counties will update (or adopt) their economic development element – tailored to meet the jurisdiction's unique needs and leveraging public investments – as specified in the Growth Management Act, when conducting the expected 2024 comprehensive plan update.

EXIT / E Denny Way
Streetcar

Seattle & SeaTac/Airport

Departs to Seattle &
SeaTac/Airport
10 min
20 min
40 min

Capitol Hill Station

11:34 AM

Link

153A

Link

SoundTransit

Transportation

Goal: *The region has a sustainable, equitable, affordable, safe, and efficient multimodal transportation system, with specific emphasis on an integrated regional transit network that supports the Regional Growth Strategy and promotes vitality of the economy, environment, and health.*

VISION 2050 provides a framework for long-range transportation planning in the region. A safe and efficient transportation system is essential to the region's quality of life and serves as the backbone of the economy. As the region continues to grow and the travel needs of people change over time, improving mobility will be a challenging task.

The region is making historic investments in transit that include light rail, heavy rail, bus rapid transit, and ferries. Voters have approved measures authorizing $54 billion to build out the region's light rail network, which will extend from Seattle to Everett, Tacoma, Redmond, and Issaquah. When complete, the region's light rail system will be among the largest in the nation. In addition, 28 new or extended bus rapid transit lines are planned across all four counties through 2040. Passenger-only ferry routes are also expanding, with four routes currently operating as of 2019 and new routes being studied for the future. Further investment in commuter rail service is also occurring.

Over the last decade, transit ridership has experienced robust growth, with the central Puget Sound region being one of only four regions across the country with consistent growth in transit boardings. While COVID-19 has caused sudden and dramatic drops in transit ridership and revenue and has perhaps accelerated the acceptance of remote work environments, transit will continue to be a critical element for mobility as the region grows over the next 30 years. The region's investment in high-occupancy toll lanes and other capital improvements are supporting this growth in transit, particularly the performance of bus rapid transit lines. VISION 2050 incorporates a renewed focus on locating growth near current and future high-capacity transit facilities, with a goal for 65% of the region's population growth and 75% of the region's employment growth to be located in regional growth centers and areas within walking distance of high-capacity transit.

The region's historic investment in transit, and continued investments across modes, are critical due to the increases in congestion and travel delay seen in the region over the past decade. Since 2010, the region has grown by over 440,000 residents and 381,000 jobs. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, delay on the region's freeway corridors had increased more than 50% since 2014, and the average travel time to work had continued to steadily increase across all modes, averaging around 30 minutes. Notably, the share of commuters with travel times over 60 minutes increased steeply and was higher than the share of commuters with travel times less than 10 minutes. This was true in each of the four counties.
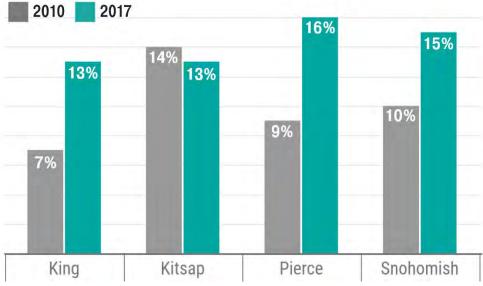
Figure 30 – Share of Commuters, Travel Time Greater Than 1 Hour, 2010-2017

Source: 2010-2017 American Community Survey

People want shorter travel times and greater options, yet the costs of providing new transportation capacity continues to increase at rates greater than inflation. At the same time, the future value of the fuel tax – the primary source for funding transportation investments – is limited. Advances in vehicle fuel economy, increasing construction costs, and erosion of purchasing power due to inflation have demonstrated the need to find other ways to pay for transportation investments.

With scores of local and state agencies responsible for implementing separate parts of the overall system, a coordinated regional approach to building and funding the transportation system is critical. If the region is to sustain its high quality of life and continue to support innovation, continued investments are necessary to complete, operate, and maintain the system.

VISION 2050 establishes the long-range regional policy direction for meeting this challenge and provides a basis for the more detailed planning and investment strategies in the Regional Transportation Plan, and at the local level. As the region's designated Metropolitan Planning Organization and state Regional Transportation Planning Organization, PSRC is responsible for developing and maintaining a long-range multimodal transportation plan that provides a regional perspective for transportation that coordinates across jurisdictions and recognizes the critical link between transportation, land use planning, economic development, and the environment.

The Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan shows how the region intends to catch up and keep pace with expected growth. It identifies how the region's transportation system will be sustained and improved to better connect residents with employment centers, educational opportunities, major military installations, and other destinations such as the region's many recreational and cultural opportunities. It outlines unprecedented investments the region is making to improve highway, transit, rail, ferry, bicycle, and pedestrian systems to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. The plan describes how billions of dollars of federal, state, and local transportation funding will make improvements to the region's highway system, local roads, freight mobility, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, and transit options.
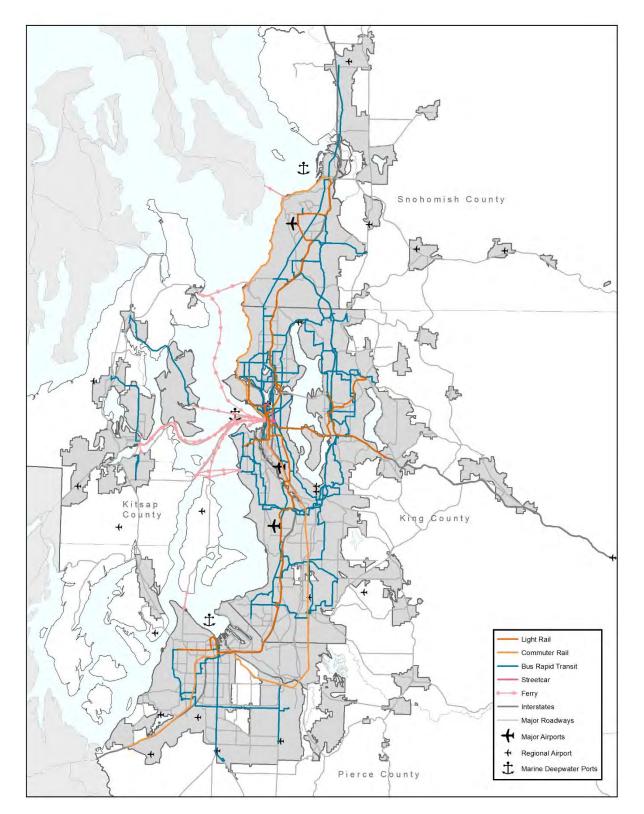
Under federal transportation planning and funding statutes and regulations, PSRC is responsible for programming and maintaining a four-year regional Transportation Improvement Program, and for selecting projects to receive certain funds from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, usually on a two-year cycle. The policies guiding the competitive distribution of these funds are based on implementing the priorities identified in VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan. Specific policies about prioritization of PSRC's federal funds can be found in the Regional Collaboration chapter. While an important source, federal funds managed by PSRC represent a small percentage of total funds invested in transportation projects annually in the region. Other federal, state, and local funds support most transportation investments in the region.

Together, VISION 2050 and the Regional Transportation Plan serve to coordinate transportation planning and project implementation across jurisdictions and at the local level. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan identifies investments through the year 2040. The 2022 update to the plan will provide an opportunity to consider the types of investments necessary to serve an additional decade of growth to 2050. The local comprehensive plans and transportation agency plans that follow will identify specific improvements, projects, and programs for those later years.

Under the Growth Management Act, the state, local jurisdictions, and other transportation agencies are responsible for implementing transportation investments. They do so through projects that maintain, improve, and create new roadways, transit service, and pedestrian, bicycle, and freight infrastructure. Working together to consider mobility and access needs both within and beyond the borders of individual jurisdictions is critical to building the efficient, multimodal system described in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Figure 31 – Regional Transportation System Map

Light Rail	
Commuter Rail	
Bus Rapid Transit	
Streetcar	
Ferry	
Interstates	
Major Roadways	
Major Airports	
Regional Airport	
Marine Deepwater Ports	

VISION 2050

Supporting the Regional Growth Strategy

Continued growth of people and jobs will increase pressure on the region's transportation system. The Regional Growth Strategy is built around the concept that additional transportation infrastructure and services will be prioritized for areas expected to accommodate the most growth. This includes investments to support continued growth in local and regional centers and around high-capacity transit station areas. Supporting the Regional Growth Strategy will require a commitment to developing a highly efficient multimodal transportation system throughout the region. VISION 2050 transportation policies guide and coordinate actions to build strong regional and local integration of land use and transportation.
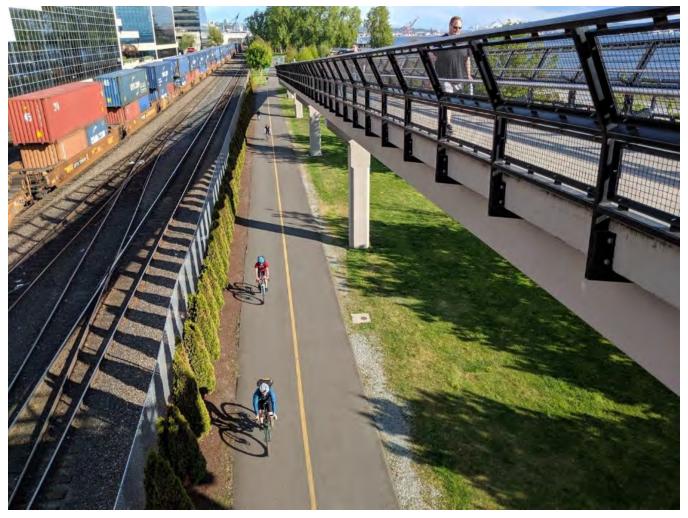
Supporting People

Continued growth in the region increases the need for accessible, affordable, and convenient mobility for all people in the region. Everyone should have equitable access to goods, services, and jobs. Yet with a booming economy and rising housing costs, many of the region's residents find themselves priced out of major employment centers, increasing commute distances and the financial burden of transportation. This hits the region's lowest-income households the hardest. The resulting disconnect between where people live and work has contributed to record levels of freeway congestion, and historic ridership and crowding on transit. These challenges are already imposing costs that are likely to increase in the future without meaningful action to provide more accessible transportation choices and improving the jobs-housing balance.

An equitable transportation system supports broad mobility and connectivity, prioritizes an effective and affordable public transportation network that supports transit-dependent communities, and provides access to core services and amenities, including employment, education, and health and social services. It includes providing access to transportation choices for all, ensuring that travel times to key destinations are reasonable for all people, and requires assessing how the region can better connect places that have low access to opportunity to places that have more opportunity.

Mobility and Accessibility

As the region continues to grow and becomes more congested, transportation investments that improve mobility are key. These include completing a regional high-capacity transit network with seamless connections to local transit systems and creating robust multimodal access to the overall transit network. It also includes continued mobility for freight and goods movement, as well as improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, multimodal and passenger-only ferries, aviation and intercity rail systems that connect to other states and countries, and critical highway links. VISION 2050 calls for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system that supports all of these needs, and ensures access to goods, services, and amenities that will help people and the economy thrive.

Supporting the Economy

The region's economy depends on a robust, resilient transportation system that efficiently connects people to jobs, schools, and services, and moves freight and goods. Nearly all products in the region are transported using a complex system of roads, rail lines, and sea and air routes, as well as the intermodal terminals that connect them. As one of the world's global gateways and major entry points into North America, the freight system in the Pacific Northwest reaches far beyond the region's boundaries and involves a mix of public and private ownership. The transportation system investments supported by VISION 2050 will help grow the region's economy.

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A Sustainable Transportation System

A sustainable transportation system will address the important task of preserving and maintaining existing transportation assets and making the current system work more efficiently and safely. Investments to encourage a shift from driving alone by providing convenient, safe and accessible options are critical to achieving this vision. The region supports investments that work to achieve the state's Target Zero goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on roads and highways by 2030. Priorities also focus on developing a secure and resilient transportation network, being prepared for potential impacts from natural disasters and other catastrophes and planning for recovery. As traditional sources of revenues supporting transportation become less reliable, the pursuit of alternative transportation financing mechanisms such as roadway pricing and other user fees will be key to developing and managing a sustainable transportation system into the future.

Protecting the Environment

The regional transportation system should be planned and designed to keep the region's air and water healthy, sustain the region's overall environment, assist in coordinated efforts to protect and restore the health of the region's watersheds, and reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions to address climate change. Untreated stormwater from transportation infrastructure has contributed to the degradation of Puget Sound and other water bodies, and inadequate or missing culverts have prevented fish passage to spawning areas. As new transportation infrastructure is developed, there is an opportunity to improve water quality and habitat.

The Regional Transportation Plan sets the region on course to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions through a flexible and balanced approach of land use, pricing, choices, and technology. One important element – among many – will be to advance the adoption of electric vehicles across the region and support the necessary infrastructure to achieve this transition. VISION 2050's Climate Change chapter highlights the importance of taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Innovation and Transformation

Rapidly developing technological innovations have the potential to disrupt and transform the way we think about transportation systems. These changes range from improvements to existing technologies, including Intelligent Transportation Systems, to shared mobility, improved traveler information tools, and connected or autonomous vehicles. These innovations could have an enormous influence on how and where people live, shop, work, and play, and how the region develops and designs roadways and other transportation infrastructure. The expanding shift towards on-demand mobility services and new technologies supporting those fleets has the potential to change trends in private car ownership and usage, local and regional parking needs, and the use of public right-of-way for pick-up and drop-off zones. Similarly, the rise in e-commerce and urban delivery will have impacts on both the transportation system and land uses throughout the region. However, the rapid pace of change in technology makes it hard to predict when new technologies will mature and become widespread, and what the impacts will be on the system. The region must prepare for this potential transformation and ensure those changes support the region's communities and vision for the future.

Transportation Policies

The Regional Transportation Plan

MPP-T-1

Maintain and operate transportation systems to provide safe, efficient, and reliable movement of people, goods, and services.

MPP-T-2

Protect the investment in the existing system and lower overall life-cycle costs through effective maintenance and preservation programs.

MPP-T-3

Reduce the need for new capital improvements through investments in operations, pricing programs, demand management strategies, and system management activities that improve the efficiency of the current system.

MPP-T-4

Improve the safety of the transportation system and, in the long term, achieve the state's goal of zero deaths and serious injuries.

MPP-T-5

Develop a transportation system that minimizes negative impacts to, and promotes, human health.

MPP-T-6

Pursue alternative transportation financing methods, such as user fees, tolls, and other pricing mechanisms to manage and fund the maintenance, improvement, preservation, and operation of the transportation system.

MPP-T-7

Fund, complete, and operate the highly efficient, multimodal system in the Regional Transportation Plan to support the Regional Growth Strategy. Coordinate WSDOT, regional, and local transportation agencies, in collaboration with the state legislature, to build the multimodal system.

MPP-T-8

Strategically expand capacity and increase efficiency of the transportation system to move goods, services, and people consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Focus on investments that produce the greatest net benefits to people and minimize the environmental impacts of transportation.

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MPP-T-9

Implement transportation programs and projects that provide access to opportunities while preventing or mitigating negative impacts to people of color, people with low incomes, and people with special transportation needs.

MPP-T-10

Ensure mobility choices for people with special transportation needs, including persons with disabilities, seniors, youth, and people with low incomes.

MPP-T-11

Design, construct, and operate a safe and convenient transportation system for all users while accommodating the movement of freight and goods, using best practices and context sensitive design strategies.

MPP-T-12

Emphasize transportation investments that provide and encourage alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle travel and increase travel options, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers.

MPP-T-13

Increase the proportion of trips made by transportation modes that are alternatives to driving alone, especially to and within centers and along corridors connecting centers, by ensuring availability of reliable and competitive transit options.

MPP-T-14

Integrate transportation systems to make it easy for people and freight to move from one mode or technology to another.

MPP-T-15

Prioritize investments in transportation facilities and services in the urban growth area that support compact, pedestrian- and transit-oriented densities and development.

MPP-T-16

Improve local street patterns – including their design and how they are used – for walking, bicycling, and transit use to enhance communities, connectivity, and physical activity.

MPP-T-17

Promote and incorporate bicycle and pedestrian travel as important modes of transportation by providing facilities and navigable connections.

MPP-T-18

Promote coordination among transportation providers and local governments to ensure that joint- and mixed-use developments are designed in a way that improves overall mobility and accessibility to and within such development.

MPP-T-19

Design transportation programs and projects to support local and regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas.

MPP-T-20

Promote the preservation of existing rights-of-way for future high-capacity transit.

MPP-T-21

Design transportation facilities to fit within the context of the built or natural environments in which they are located.

MPP-T-22

Avoid construction of major roads and capacity expansion on existing roads in rural and resource areas. Where increased roadway capacity is warranted to support safe and efficient travel through rural areas, appropriate rural development regulations and strong commitments to access management should be in place prior to authorizing such capacity expansion in order to prevent unplanned growth in rural areas.

Supporting the Economy

MPP-T-23

Make transportation investments that improve economic and living conditions so that industries and skilled workers continue to be retained and attracted to the region.

MPP-T-24

Improve key facilities connecting the region to national and world markets to support the economic vitality of the region.

MPP-T-25

Ensure the freight system supports the growing needs of global trade and state, regional and local distribution of goods and services.

MPP-T-26

Maintain and improve the existing multimodal freight transportation system in the region to increase reliability, efficiency, and mobility, and prepare for continuing growth in freight and goods movement.

MPP-T-27

Coordinate regional planning with rail line capacity expansion plans and support capacity expansion that is compatible with state, regional, and local plans.

MPP-T-28

Promote coordinated planning and effective management to optimize the region's aviation system in a manner that minimizes health, air quality, and noise impacts to communities, including historically marginalized communities. Consider demand management alternatives as

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future growth needs are analyzed, recognizing capacity constraints at existing facilities and the time and resources necessary to build new ones. Support the ongoing process of development of a new commercial aviation facility in Washington State.

Protecting the Environment

MPP-T-29

Support the transition to a cleaner transportation system through investments in zero emission vehicles, low carbon fuels and other clean energy options.

MPP-T-30

Provide infrastructure sufficient to support widespread electrification of the transportation system.

MPP-T-31

Advance the resilience of the transportation system by incorporating redundancies, preparing for disasters and other impacts, and coordinated planning for system recovery.

MPP-T-32

Reduce stormwater pollution from transportation facilities and improve fish passage, through retrofits and updated design standards. Where feasible, integrate with other improvements to achieve multiple benefits and cost efficiencies.

Innovation

MPP-T-33

Prepare for changes in transportation technologies and mobility patterns, to support communities with a sustainable and efficient transportation system.

MPP-T-34

Be responsive to changes in mobility patterns and needs for both people and goods, and encourage partnerships with the private sector, where applicable.

Transportation Actions

Regional Actions

T-Action-1

Regional Transportation Plan: PSRC will update the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to be consistent with federal and state requirements and the goals and policies of VISION 2050. The RTP will incorporate the Regional Growth Strategy and plan for a sustainable multimodal transportation system for 2050. The plan will identify how the system will be maintained and efficiently operated, with strategic capacity investments, to provide safe and equitable access to housing, jobs, and other opportunities, as well as improved mobility for freight and goods delivery. Specific elements of the RTP include the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan and continued updates to the regional integrated transit network (including high capacity transit, local transit, auto and passenger ferries), the Active Transportation Plan, regional freight network, aviation planning and other important system components.

T-Action-2

Funding: PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will advocate for new funding tools to address the gap in local funding identified in the Regional Transportation Plan.

T-Action-3

Transportation Technology and Changing Mobility: PSRC will continue to conduct research and analysis on the potential impacts from emerging technologies and changes in mobility patterns, including ongoing improvements to PSRC modeling and analytical tools. PSRC will build relationships among a diverse set of stakeholders and facilitate discussions to assist member organizations to become prepared for these changes in transportation mobility and to address consequences to and from local decision making. Outcomes could include guidance, best practices and future policies.

T-Action-4

Electric Vehicles: PSRC will work with partner agencies on regional collaboration to support electric vehicles and associated infrastructure issues. PSRC will engage with partners on distribution of best practices for local governments.

T-Action-5

Changing Technology: PSRC will conduct research and analysis on the potential impacts from emerging technologies which impact housing, land use, job distribution, or other applicable topics. PSRC will serve as a resource to assist local jurisdictions in preparing for these changes.

T-Action-6

Freight Mobility: PSRC will continue to conduct research, data collection and analysis of the growth and impacts of freight and goods movement and delivery, including updating baseline inventories and identification of mobility and other issues. PSRC will continue collaboration with stakeholders to address key freight issues as part of the next RTP update.

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T-Action-7

Climate: PSRC will continue to monitor and advance the implementation of the adopted Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy - or future versions thereof - to achieve meaningful reductions of emissions throughout the region from transportation and land use. This will include ongoing collaboration with a variety of partners on each element, for example regional coordination on electric vehicle infrastructure, roadway pricing, transit-oriented development and others. This will also include continued development of regional analyses and research of additional options for reducing emissions.

T-Action-8

Aviation Capacity: PSRC will continue to conduct research and analysis of the region's aviation system to assess future capacity needs, issues, challenges, and community impacts to help ensure that the system can accommodate future growth while minimizing community impacts, including historically marginalized communities, and to set the stage for future planning efforts. PSRC will work in cooperation with the state, which will play a lead role in addressing future aviation capacity needs.

Local Action

T-Action-9

VISION 2050 Implementation: Counties and cities, with guidance and assistance from PSRC, will update local plans to support implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan and address the Regional Growth Strategy, including addressing changes related to technology, freight and delivery, and the needs of all users.

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EVERETT
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
2702 Hoyt Avenue

Public Services

Goal*: The region supports development with adequate public facilities and services in a timely, coordinated, efficient, and cost-effective manner that supports local and regional growth planning objectives.*

Public services are essential to the day-to-day operation of the region, helping make communities safe, healthy, prosperous, and resilient. As the region grows, public services will need to continue to adjust and evolve to meet the region's changing needs.

Public services are provided by local governments, special purpose districts, and private entities. They include drinking water, solid waste management, sewage treatment, stormwater management, energy, telecommunications, emergency services, schools, libraries, law and justice services, health and human services, and community centers.

New or expanded public services and infrastructure are needed to support new development. At the same time, existing infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance and upgrading. Using more efficient designs and technologies can curb some of the need for new infrastructure. A commitment to sustainable infrastructure ensures the least possible strain on the region's resources and the environment, while contributing to healthy and prosperous communities.

Aligning the provision of public services with the Regional Growth Strategy allows services to be provided more efficiently and at lower operating costs. Providing urban services in urban areas can reduce travel time and transportation impacts and make services more accessible. Locating services in communities also supports local investments in neighborhoods and centers, reinforcing the desired growth pattern and curbing rural growth. This is consistent with the Growth Management Act which allows certain services, such as sanitary sewers, only in the urban growth area – with few exceptions (RCW 36.70A.110 (4)).

The health of the region's residents depends on whether they have fair and timely access to high-quality, affordable, and conveniently-located public services. Equitable access to these services will require identifying gaps in services and planning for expanded or improved services and facilities, which represent significant investment. As the internet has become an increasingly important resource, the widespread availability of affordable, reliable internet and telecommunications services has become a priority for communities. Inadequate provision of some services, particularly in underserved areas, such as water, wastewater, and stormwater could become public health, safety, and environmental justice issues. Coordinated planning between PSRC, counties, cities, and service providers will help make public services more affordable, effective, sustainable, and equitable.

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Many parts of the region, especially the unincorporated urban growth area, receive a variety of services through special purpose districts. Special purpose district boundaries often overlap with municipal boundaries and the urban growth area boundary. Special purpose districts and local jurisdictions need to coordinate to plan for future capacity, but the lack of uniformity among special purpose districts and local jurisdictions can make coordination challenging. The Growth Management Act states that cities are the preferred providers of urban services (RCW 36.70A.110 (4)).

Cities that own or operate their utilities and public services are more directly capable of planning for their operation and service. Cities that do not own such utilities and services have less ability to directly plan for the infrastructure needed to support long-term development and redevelopment, increasing the challenge of implementing planning policies.

Special Purpose Districts

Washington state law allows special purpose districts to be created for a variety of services, including sewer, water, drainage, flood control, parks and recreation, fire, libraries, public hospitals, schools, and public transportation. There are more than 330 special purpose districts in the central Puget Sound region. The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities to work together but does not place the same obligation on all special purpose districts.

Sustainable and Resilient Public Services

Many of the resources the region depends on are finite and vulnerable. Continued growth, with more demand for water, energy, wastewater management, and other utilities, can threaten the region's ability to maintain current level of service standards and protect resources.

Resources like water and energy can be managed in a way that conserves them for future generations. Conservation and evolving management practices, such as water reuse, play key roles in efficient use of resources. Improving wastewater treatment and stormwater management is crucial in recovering the health of Puget Sound and surrounding water bodies. Consistent with VISION 2050, public service providers are striving to decrease environmental and community impacts. Many providers are educating the public to be partners in these efforts.

Transitioning to low carbon energy will require retrofitting infrastructure to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Understanding the impacts that climate change will have on future conditions and infrastructure is an important part of planning for public services.

The central Puget Sound region is vulnerable to natural hazards like earthquakes, landslides, and wildfires, and is also threatened by sea level rise. Community resilience is the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. Public services play roles in community resilience through siting, designing, building, and operating public services and infrastructure that avoid or withstand hazards and ensure that services can continue or quickly resume after a disaster or emergency. Lack of planning for resilience leads to disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, who tend to have greater exposure to hazards and fewer resources to respond.

Capital Facility Siting

Expanding public services to accommodate growth can create challenges in how and where to site new facilities. While capital facilities are essential to communities, commerce, and quality of life, they often affect the environment and adjacent communities. Infrastructure such as sewage treatment plants and power transfer stations become hard to site and must be designed and operated without being nuisances to neighbors. High land costs make it difficult and costly to build new facilities like schools and libraries close to where people live. However, innovative practices such as joint siting and sharing of facilities that provide multiple benefits (such as playgrounds shared by schools and the public, stormwater parks, and collocated services) can reduce costs.

Siting capital facilities to support local and regional growth plans includes investing in capital facilities and amenities to support regional and local centers and siting capital facilities according to the populations they serve. Cultural and civic facilities contribute to building social capital and creating a sense of community. They best serve their populations when located in central places that people can reach by walking, biking, or using transit. Facilities serving urban populations are more efficient and cost-effective when sited in urban areas, while facilities serving rural populations are more effective when designed at the appropriate scale and located in adjacent towns or communities.

School Siting

School district boundaries have been long established, and some districts that were historically rural have become major suburban education providers. As a result, there are some districts that provide school services to both urban and rural populations, and some that own sites outside the urban growth area intended for future schools. Developing urban-serving schools on these outlying locations often requires expensive programs to transport students and encourages students to drive or be driven to schools.

Schools should be encouraged to become the hubs and gathering places of their communities by locating urban-serving schools in urban settings and designing facilities to better integrate with their urban neighborhoods. Collaborative planning between school districts and local governments on siting urban schools has been successful in identifying locations, problem-solving development challenges, and encouraging walking and biking to schools.

In 2017, the Washington State Legislature amended the Growth Management Act to allow, under certain circumstances, schools serving urban and rural populations outside the urban growth area if certain conditions are met.

Careful consideration of equity can help ensure that the benefits and impacts of capital facilities are shared by communities throughout the region. The historic provision of public services often systematically and disproportionately created worse conditions for people of color and people with low incomes, which lowered access to opportunity and quality of life. To this day, people in these communities may lack access to reliable services and infrastructure, such as sewers, broadband, and parks. Looking to the future, there are opportunities to correct these past inequities and increase access to opportunity for groups who have been historically marginalized. While certain facilities generate unavoidable adverse impacts, they can be mitigated by adjusting service priorities and not siting facilities in a manner that unduly burdens certain communities or population groups.

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Manchester Stormwater Park, Kitsap County

Public Services Policies

MPP-PS-1

Protect and enhance the environment and public health and safety when providing services and facilities.

MPP-PS-2

Promote affordability and equitable access of public services to all communities, especially the historically underserved. Prioritize investments to address disparities.

MPP-PS-3

Time and phase services and facilities to guide growth and development in a manner that supports the Regional Growth Strategy.

MPP-PS-4

Promote demand management and the conservation of services and facilities prior to developing new facilities.

MPP-PS-5

Do not provide urban services in rural areas. Design services for limited access when they are needed to solve isolated health and sanitation problems, so as not to increase the development potential of the surrounding rural area.

MPP-PS-6

Encourage the design of public facilities and utilities in rural areas to be at a size and scale appropriate to rural locations, so as not to increase development pressure.

MPP-PS-7

Obtain urban services from cities or appropriate regional service providers. Encourage cities, counties, and special purpose districts, including sewer, water, and fire districts, to coordinate planning efforts, agree on optimal ways to provide efficient service, and support consolidations that would improve service to the public.

MPP-PS-8

Develop conservation measures to reduce solid waste and increase recycling.

MPP-PS-9

Promote improved conservation and more efficient use of water, as well as the increased use of reclaimed water, to reduce wastewater generation and ensure water availability.

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MPP-PS-10

Serve new development within the urban growth area with sanitary sewer systems or fit it with dry sewers in anticipation of connection to the sewer system. Alternative technology to sewers should be considered only when it can be shown to produce treatment at standards that are equal to or better than the sewer system and where a long-term maintenance plan is in place.

MPP-PS-11

Replace failing septic systems within the urban growth area with sanitary sewers or alternative technology that is comparable or better.

MPP-PS-12

Use innovative and state-of-the-art design and techniques when replacing septic tanks to restore and improve environmental quality.

MPP-PS-13

Promote the use of renewable energy resources to meet the region's energy needs.

MPP-PS-14

Reduce the rate of energy consumption through conservation and alternative energy forms to extend the life of existing facilities and infrastructure.

MPP-PS-15

Support the necessary investments in utility infrastructure to facilitate moving to low-carbon energy sources.

MPP-PS-16

Plan for the provision of telecommunication infrastructure to provide access to residents and businesses in all communities, especially underserved areas.

MPP-PS-17

Coordinate, design, and plan for public safety services and programs, including emergency management. These efforts may be interjurisdictional.

MPP-PS-18

Locate community facilities and health and human services in centers and near transit facilities for all to access services conveniently.

MPP-PS-19

Support efforts to increase the resilience of public services, utilities, and infrastructure by preparing for disasters and other impacts and coordinated planning for system recovery.

MPP-PS-20

Consider climate change, economic, and health impacts when siting and building essential public services and facilities.

MPP-PS-21

Consider the potential impacts of climate change and fisheries protection on the region's water supply.

MPP-PS-22

Provide residents of the region with access to high quality drinking water that meets or is better than federal and state requirements.

MPP-PS-23

Promote coordination among local and tribal governments and water providers and suppliers to meet long-term water needs in the region in a manner that supports the region's growth strategy.

MPP-PS-24

Reduce the per capita rate of water consumption through conservation, efficiency, reclamation, and reuse.

MPP-PS-25

Protect the source of the water supply to meet the needs for both human consumption and for environmental balance.

MPP-PS-26

Work cooperatively with school districts to plan for school facilities to meet the existing and future community needs consistent with adopted comprehensive plans and growth forecasts, including siting and designing schools to support safe, walkable access and best serve their communities.

MPP-PS-27

Site schools, institutions, and other community facilities that primarily serve urban populations within the urban growth area in locations where they will promote the local desired growth plans, except as provided for by RCW 36.70A.211.

MPP-PS-28

Locate schools, institutions, and other community facilities serving rural residents in neighboring cities and towns and design these facilities in keeping with the size and scale of the local community, except as provided for by RCW 36.70A.211.

MPP-PS-29

Site or expand regional capital facilities in a manner that (1) reduces adverse social, environmental, and economic impacts on the host community, especially on historically marginalized communities, (2) equitably balances the location of new facilities away from disproportionately burdened communities, and (3) addresses regional planning objectives.

MPP-PS-30

Do not locate regional capital facilities outside the urban growth area unless it is demonstrated that a non-urban site is the most appropriate location for such a facility.

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Public Services Actions

Regional Actions

PS-Action-1

Utility and Service District Planning: PSRC will work with electrical utilities, water providers, special purpose districts, and other utilities to facilitate coordinated efforts to develop long-range plans that comply with the Growth Management Act and implement VISION 2050.

PS-Action-2

Facilities Siting and Design: PSRC will facilitate cooperative efforts with special purpose districts and local jurisdictions to site and design facilities that enhance local communities in accordance with growth management goals and VISION 2050.

PS-Action-3

School Siting: PSRC will initiate and support discussions with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to facilitate updates that modernize school siting standards, especially those related to site area requirements. Updates should work to align school siting standards with the goals of the Growth Management Act and facilitate school districts' ability to better meet urban capacity needs.

PS-Action-4

Regional Support for School Siting Best Practices: PSRC will research and develop guidance on innovative methods to update regulations and local plans to develop a regional approach to school siting and to assist local jurisdictions and school districts in siting new schools in urbanized areas.

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Implementation

The collective work of PSRC, counties, cities, and other agencies and organizations is needed to guide the region toward its desired future. PSRC's implementation of VISION 2050 occurs through five primary work programs described in this section:

- Data, tools, and planning guidance
- Policy and plan review
- Regional transportation planning and funding
- Regional economic development planning
- Other regional actions

This chapter also describes how VISION 2050 may be amended periodically to reflect technical or significant changes and provides the legal framework for VISION 2050.

Data, Tools, and Local Assistance

PSRC provides data, analysis, guidance, and technical support to its members. Members participate in a wide variety of workshops and other education and training opportunities to learn about important issues for local jurisdictions, such as establishing growth targets, implementing housing affordability strategies, countywide planning policies, comprehensive plans, center plans, and transit station area plans. Technical assistance is also identified in VISION 2050 actions.

PSRC provides regional and small area forecasts, as well as data and tools for demographic, transportation, housing, land use, environmental, and other research. PSRC staff are available to support local work with data and analysis. The most popular maps and data sets are available on PSRC's website, and members may make custom requests. PSRC also conducts land use, transportation, and mobile source emissions modeling.

Policy and Plan Review

Regional review of local, countywide, and transit agency plans provides the opportunity for coordination and collaboration and helps in understanding how individual plans are working collectively to support the region's objectives.

PSRC's process for the review of countywide, local, and transit agency plans is established by the consistency requirements of the Growth Management Act, as well as state-required guidelines for evaluating comprehensive plans and directives in PSRC's Interlocal Agreement. State law requires regional "guidelines and principles" for regional transportation planning (RCW 47.80.026). The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2050 serve as the region's guidelines and principles. They must address factors such as: concentration of economic activity, residential density, development and urban design that supports high-capacity transit, joint- and mixed-use development, freight movement and port access, development patterns that promote walking and biking, transportation demand management, effective and efficient transportation, access to regional systems, and intermodal connections. Additional information on the legal framework is provided at the end of this chapter.
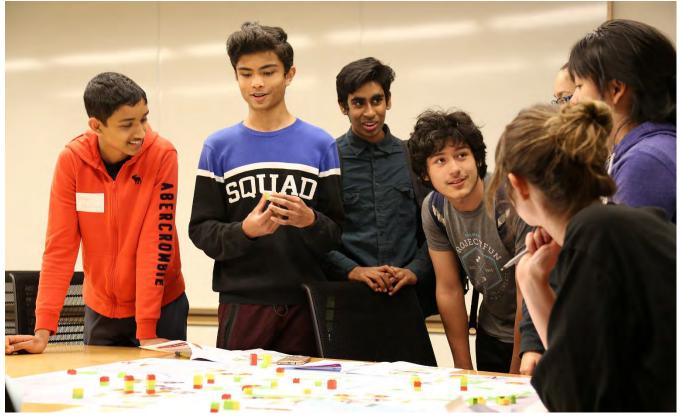
Certification of plans is a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding or proceed with projects submitted into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. Review of local, countywide and transit agency plans is described below and in more detail in PSRC's Plan Review Manual.

Countywide Planning Policies

Countywide planning policies provide a county-level framework for guiding local planning. Countywide planning policies are adopted by each county and its cities through countywide planning councils and local ratification processes. PSRC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, must certify the countywide planning policies for consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan and regional guidelines and principles (RCW 47.80). The Regional Collaboration chapter calls for countywide planning policies to be updated to reflect revised multicounty planning policies by December 31, 2021.

The countywide planning policies generally contain local growth targets that implement the Regional Growth Strategy. By allocating county and regional growth to groups of regional geographies, the Regional Growth Strategy preserves flexibility for counties to work with their cities as they develop specific, jurisdiction-level growth targets that take into account local conditions, such as development capacity and phased opening of high-capacity transit. PSRC provides data and technical assistance to countywide planning groups to assist in the development of growth targets that are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

PSRC provides early consultation, data and technical assistance, and early review of draft countywide planning policies prior to adoption. Once adopted, PSRC reviews countywide planning policies for certification.

Bellevue Youth Council

Local Comprehensive Plans

Every county, city, and town in the region maintains a comprehensive plan to shape the future of their community. PSRC works with local governments and agencies to ensure that planning is coordinated and meets regional and state requirements consistent with PSRC's adopted Policy and Plan Review Process. PSRC reviews and certifies the transportation-related provisions of local comprehensive plans based on three things:

1. Established regional guidelines and principles
2. The adopted long-range Regional Transportation Plan
3. Transportation planning requirements in the Growth Management Act

PSRC's Plan Review Manual provides details on the plan review and certification process, including guidance and checklists for aligning plans and policies with VISION 2050 and Growth Management Act requirements.

Local comprehensive plans were reviewed under VISION 2040 provisions for the first time in 2014-2016. Strengths and challenges from that review were assessed and documented in a report called Taking Stock 2016. Based on feedback from the Taking Stock assessment, PSRC will update the plan review process and Plan Review Manual to make review of future local plan updates more clear, predictable, and efficient. Earlier communication on expectations for updates and reviews will be key and improving the process for board review of plans will help to make it more predictable.

As jurisdictions develop their comprehensive plan updates, PSRC provides review and feedback in three phases: pre-update consultation, early review of draft plan elements, and review of adopted plans for certification. PSRC will coordinate with countywide groups and hold workshops on the plan review process. Pre-update consultation between jurisdictions and PSRC will help identify new provisions in VISION 2050 and the Growth Management Act. Consistent with the updated Plan Review Manual, the local plan certification checklist will provide clarity on expectations for plan certification.

Subarea Plans for Regional Centers

Jurisdictions that have regionally designated centers – either regional growth centers or regional manufacturing/industrial centers – are required by PSRC to prepare a subarea plan for each center. Subarea plans should satisfy the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.080) and regional requirements for subarea plans. Regional requirements are documented in the Regional Centers Framework, Designation Procedures for New Centers, and regional center plans checklist.

For new regional centers, PSRC's designation procedures require that the jurisdiction adopt a subarea plan prior to designation. The process to certify a subarea plan is similar to the process for certifying comprehensive plans.

Transit Agency Long-Range Plans and Transit Development Plans

To coordinate transit planning with local and regional growth management planning efforts, transit agency long-range plans should demonstrate consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan, be compatible with multicounty planning policies and the countywide planning policies for the county or counties in which the agency provides service, and facilitate coordination with local governments within the agency's service area.

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Transit agencies are expected to update their long-range plans on a regular basis to provide necessary revisions to the Regional Transportation Plan's future integrated transit network and to assist in identifying new assumptions for capital needs associated with the future integrated transit network and access to the transit system.

Sound Transit's Regional Transit System Plan

Washington state law requires PSRC to formally certify that the regional transit system plan prepared by the Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RCW 81.104). Updates to the regional transit system plan must also address RCW 81.112.350, which directs Sound Transit to implement the regional transit-oriented development strategy developed by PSRC.

Regional Transportation Planning and Project Funding

The Regional Transportation Plan, the region's federally required metropolitan transportation plan, is the functional plan implementing VISION 2050 transportation provisions. The Regional Transportation Plan describes how the region intends to provide transportation choices to support expected growth and identifies investments the region is making to improve transit, highway, rail, ferry, bicycle, and pedestrian systems to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. A state and federally required air quality conformity analysis is conducted on the plan, as well as a broader emissions analysis that includes greenhouse gas emissions. Federal transportation planning regulations require metropolitan transportation plans to be updated every four years. The next update of PSRC's Regional Transportation Plan is scheduled for adoption in 2022. It will use the land use and growth assumptions described in in VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy.

The Regional Transportation Plan includes a list of regionally significant transportation projects that implement VISION 2050. To be considered for funding, projects must be in or consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and included in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program, which is a four-year snapshot of current transportation projects underway in the region. These projects are funded with federal, state, and local funds, including the most recent federal grants awarded through PSRC.

In addition to the list of projects, the Regional Transportation Improvement Program also contains the following information:

- The adopted policy framework for the distribution of PSRC's federal funds, which is based on the multicounty planning policies.
- A description of the project selection process for these funds.
- A discussion of the interagency coordination and the public review process.
- The findings of the air quality conformity analysis.

Each project in the Transportation Improvement Program undergoes a comprehensive review by PSRC staff to ensure it meets certain requirements.

Regional Economic Development Planning

The Regional Economic Strategy implements the economic development provisions in VISION 2050. It describes the region's approach to sustained economic vitality and global competitiveness. The Central Puget Sound Economic Development District Board develops the Regional Economic Strategy and identifies actions to implement it. These actions focus on building regional capacity, identifying emerging opportunities, providing data analysis, and collaborating on events that bring together regional economic development interests. Funding for implementation efforts come from a variety of sources such as federal and state grants, local funding, and support from regional partners. The U.S. Economic Development Administration requires the Regional Economic Strategy to be updated every five years.

Other Regional Actions

In addition to PSRC's regular technical assistance, plan review, and transportation and economic development planning programs, VISION 2050 identifies other actions designed to implement the multicounty planning policies and the Regional Growth Strategy. Many of the actions are identified as work items for PSRC; other actions are more appropriate for countywide or subregional groups, counties, cities, or other partners. Some of the regional actions VISION 2050 identifies include:

- **Monitoring Program:** Track the implementation of VISION 2050 through monitoring and periodic evaluation.
- **Regional equity strategy**: Develop a regional equity strategy to make racial and social equity central to PSRC's work and support local comprehensive plan updates.
- **Regional housing strategy:** Develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy to support local comprehensive plan updates and provide the framework for regional housing assistance, including a regional housing needs assessment, best practices to promote and address housing affordability issues, and coordination with other housing efforts.
- **Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy:** Advance the implementation of the region's Greenhouse Gas Strategy to meaningfully reduce emissions throughout the region from transportation, land use, and development.
- **Open space planning:** Implement conservation, restoration, stewardship, and other recommendations in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

PSRC policy boards and the Executive Board will prioritize VISION 2050 actions in upcoming work programs and budget cycles. PSRC will identify performance measures and regularly monitor them after VISION 2050 is adopted. The plan also identifies actions for PSRC to communicate with the state Legislature on important regional implementation steps for VISION 2050.

Amendments to VISION 2050

VISION 2050, including the Regional Growth Strategy and the multicounty planning policies, may be amended periodically. Technical amendments approved by PSRC's Executive Board may include changes to the regional geography classification of a city or unincorporated community due to designation of new regional growth centers and annexation or incorporation of an unincorporated urban area. Technical amendments are limited to those updates needed to support setting Growth Management Act population and employment targets; other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

Major amendments or updates to VISION 2050 are anticipated to be completed about every 10 years to incorporate up-to-date information, such as changing demographics documented by the U.S. decennial census, and to support local comprehensive plan updates, countywide growth targets, or the Regional Transportation Plan with updated growth assumptions. Periodic major updates may also be appropriate to recognize and adapt to significant changes, such as following a five-year review and designation period for regional centers. Amendments to VISION 2050, outside of the limited technical amendments listed above, require an action of PSRC's General Assembly, which meets annually.

VISION 2050 Legal Framework

VISION 2050 was developed under the authority and mandates of federal and state statutes and regional agreements.

Growth Management Act

Washington's Growth Management Act provides the framework for planning at all levels in the state, including identifying and protecting critical environmental areas, developing multicounty and countywide planning policies, and crafting local comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A). Multicounty planning policies (and the related countywide planning policies) provide a common framework for local and regional planning in the central Puget Sound region. At a minimum, multicounty planning policies are to address the urban growth area, contiguous and orderly development, siting capital facilities, transportation, housing, joint planning, and economic development. The multicounty planning policies are included in VISION 2050.

Additional guidance is provided by the portion of state law that authorizes and directs the planning efforts and responsibilities of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RCW 47.80). PSRC is designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. This legislation related to the Growth Management Act calls for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to develop and carry out a program to certify the transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans. It mandates the development of regional guidelines and principles to guide both regional and local transportation planning. These guidelines and principles are to address, at a minimum, the following factors: concentration of economic activity, residential density, urban design that supports high-capacity transit, freight transportation and port access, development patterns that promote pedestrian and nonmotorized transportation, circulation systems, transportation demand management, joint and mixed-use developments, railroad right-of-way corridors, and intermodal connections. Multicounty planning policies serve as PSRC's regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.

PSRC's certification of transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans includes determining conformity with state requirements for transportation planning in local plans, consistency with adopted regional guidelines and principles, and consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan (RCW 36.70A.070 and 47.80.026). The legislation also addresses the certification of the countywide planning policies. Certification of plans is a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding or proceed with projects submitted into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Interlocal Agreement

In 1992, PSRC and its member jurisdictions, including counties, cities, federally recognized tribes, state agencies, ports, and associate members, adopted an interlocal agreement that provides PSRC with the authority to carry out the functions required under state and federal law. With regard to long-range planning, the interlocal agreement calls for PSRC to "maintain VISION as the adopted regional growth management strategy."

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Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

In 2015, Congress enacted the latest authorization for the nationwide transportation program, titled the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. This legislation includes requirements for planning by Metropolitan Planning Organizations, including maintaining financially constrained long-range transportation plans for their regions. PSRC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Federal requirements and planning factors include supporting the economic vitality of the region, increasing safety and security, improving mobility and accessibility for people and freight, protecting the environment, coordinating transportation and land use, integrating and connecting the transportation system across all modes, emphasizing the preservation of the system as well as promoting efficient management and operations, improving resilience and reliability, and enhancing travel and tourism. These planning factors have been incorporated into VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy and multicounty planning policies, which in turn guide the development of the region's functional regional transportation plan.

Public Works and Economic Development Act

The federal Public Works and Economic Development Act (1965), amended as the Public Works and Economic Development Act in 1998, supports long-term economic development in areas experiencing substantial economic distress through the creation, expansion, or retention of permanent jobs that help raise income levels. Economic development funding programs support these goals with financial backing for economic projects that support the construction or rehabilitation of essential public infrastructure and the development of facilities that are necessary to generate private investments. To be eligible for these programs, the region must develop a comprehensive economic development strategy to guide its economic development efforts. To satisfy this requirement, PSRC and the Economic Development District have developed Amazing Place, the region's economic strategy, which serves as the economic functional plan of VISION 2050.

Clean Air Acts

VISION 2050 and its multicounty planning policies were developed in conformity with the guidelines and requirements of the federal Clean Air Act and state Clean Air Act, and their related amendments. These complementary pieces of legislation define a framework for maintaining air quality and human and environmental health through planning, project implementation, and regulation. Under federal and state regulations, PSRC is required to demonstrate that the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the region's Transportation Improvement Program – which are guided by VISION 2050 – conform to the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. This conformity requirement is a mechanism for ensuring that transportation activities – plans, programs, and projects – are reviewed and evaluated for their impacts on air quality prior to funding or approval.

Analysis of Fiscal Impact

The Growth Management Act requires that countywide and multicounty planning policies address an analysis of fiscal impact. The Central Puget Sound Hearings Board concluded in City of Snoqualmie v. King County (1993), that "the purpose of the fiscal impact analysis is to realistically assess the fiscal costs and constraints of implementing countywide planning policies and thereby to contribute to the design of an effective strategy to overcome those constraints." The Hearings Board stated that "this task was imposed on cities and counties because they are the units of government directly responsible for creating and implementing the countywide planning policies, as well as the parties most directly affected fiscally by implementation of the countywide planning policies." Within the central Puget Sound region, analysis of fiscal impact is deferred to the respective countywide planning policies for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are defined according to their intended use in this document.

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

Accessibility
A measure of the ability to travel easily among various places.

Access to Opportunity
Living within walking distance or with transit access to services,

employment opportunities, education, amenities, and other key determinants of social, economic, and physical well-being.

Action
A provision or task to implement adopted policies.

Active Living
Promotion of physical activity, including walking and bicycling, to address health and personal well-being, focusing on how the built environment — including neighborhoods, transportation systems, buildings, parks and open space — can contribute to more daily movement and activity.

Activity Unit
A measure of total activity that combines the number of jobs and population.

Affiliated Area
An area within the designated urban growth area that has been identified by an adjacent city as an area for future annexation and/or joint planning. (See also *Potential Annexation Area*.)

Affordable Housing
Commonly defined in terms of housing costs as a percentage of household income. Housing is considered unaffordable when a household's monthly housing costs exceed a certain threshold – most commonly 30% of gross income – thereby reducing the budget available for basic necessities and other household expenses.

Air Toxics
Airborne chemicals found to be harmful to human health, and to plants and animals. Examples include toluene, xylene, benzene, and formaldehyde.

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Annexation	A procedure for bringing unincorporated areas into a city, town, or additional service areas into a special purpose district. An annexation area is usually adjacent to an incorporated city, town, or a special purpose district. Washington State law governs the procedures for annexation.
Area Median Income	The household income for the median, or middle, household in a city, county or region. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development calculates median income for each metropolitan region. These are used to determine income limits for government affordable housing programs.
Best Available Science	The most up-to-date information available for planning and development decision-making. Defined and required by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.172).
Brownfield	A previously developed property or site – often used for industrial activity – that now is underutilized or not in active use, on land that is either contaminated or perceived as contaminated.
Buildable Lands Analysis	An assessment of the amount of land needed for commercial, industrial, and housing development, as required by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.215). Buildable lands programs are to determine whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within the urban growth area by comparing adopted plans with actual growth.
Built Environment	Refers to the human-created surroundings that provide the setting for human activity, ranging from large-scale civic districts, commercial and industrial buildings, to neighborhoods and individual homes.
Centers	A defined focal area within a city or community that is a priority for local planning and infrastructure. VISION 2050 identifies scales of mixed-use centers, which have a mix of housing, employment, retail and entertainment uses and are served by multiple transportation options. Industrial centers concentrate and preserve manufacturing and industrial lands. Regional centers are formally designated by PSRC.
Certification	Formal process by which PSRC recognizes the consistency of local transportation-related planning provisions with the Regional Transportation Plan and conformity with state planning requirements.
Cities and Towns	A regional geography in VISION 2050 that refers to cities and towns with smaller downtown and local centers and may be served by local transit.

Compact Urban Communities	Urban locations offering transportation, housing, and shopping choices that reduce the need for automobile travel and support an efficient development pattern.
Comprehensive Plan	A local plan required by the state Growth Management Act to address land use, housing, transportation, utilities, and capital facilities, and other elements, to guide growth and development for a 20-year period (RCW 36.70A).
Concurrency	A state planning requirement to ensure that needed services and facilities are in place by the time development is completed and to be occupied, or that funding has been committed to provide such services within six years.
Conservation	The management of resources – such as water and energy – in order to eliminate waste or maximize efficiency of use.
Consistency	The degree of compatibility or agreement among planning provisions. The Growth Management Act addresses consistency in three ways: (1) internal consistency of comprehensive plans, (2) consistency of zoning and regulations with the comprehensive plan, and (3) consistency with other jurisdictions.
Core City	A regional geography within VISION 2050 that refers to a city that contains one or more regionally designated centers and connected to the high-capacity transit network.
Countywide Center	Countywide growth centers serve important roles as places for concentrating jobs, housing, shopping, and recreational opportunities. Countywide industrial centers serve as important local industrial areas. Countywide centers are designated by the countywide planning groups.
Countywide Planning Group	A body of elected officials set up in each county to coordinate growth management planning efforts among the county and its cities.
	King County: Growth Management Planning Council
	Kitsap County: Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council
	Pierce County: Pierce County Regional Council
	Snohomish County: Snohomish County Tomorrow
Countywide Planning Policy	An adopted provision developed collaboratively between the county government and the local cities and towns within that county. Countywide planning policies provide a common framework for individual comprehensive plans prepared by each local jurisdiction.

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Displacement	The involuntary relocation of current residents or businesses from their current residence. This is a different phenomenon than when property owners voluntarily sell their interests to capture an increase in value. Physical displacement is the result of eviction, acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of property, or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing. Economic displacement occurs when residents and businesses can no longer afford escalating housing costs. Cultural displacement occurs when people choose to move because their neighbors and culturally related businesses have left the area.
Energy Management Technology	Tools and practices that examine trends and patterns in energy operations and usage and identify cost effective efficiencies and conservation mechanisms. New technologies may include alternative and renewable energy sources.
Equity (also Social Equity)	All people can attain the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and enable them to reach full potential. Those affected by poverty, communities of color, and historically marginalized communities are engaged in decision-making processes, planning, and policy making.
Equitable Development/ Equitable Growth	Public and private investments, programs, and policies in neighborhoods to meet the needs of marginalized populations and to reduce disparities, providing access to quality education, living wage employment, healthy environment, affordable housing and transportation.
Functional Plan	A specialized plan focusing on a single topic area. It may contain more detailed information on actions, projects and programs – based on the policies and provisions of a more generalized overall plan. The *Regional Transportation Plan* and the *Regional Economic Strategy* are both functional plans that implement VISION 2050.
Green Building (also: Green Design)	Building design that yields environmental benefits, such as savings in energy, building materials, and water consumption, or reduced waste generation. Green development minimizes energy consumption, pollution, and the generation of wastes, while maximizing the re-use of materials and creating healthful indoor environments.
Green Stormwater Infrastructure	A stormwater management system that mimics nature using vegetation, soils, and natural processes to clean, soak up, and store water.
Greenhouse Gas	Components of the atmosphere which contribute to global warming, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and fluorinated gases. Human activities have added to the levels of most of these naturally occurring gases.

Habitats and Species of Local Importance	Those habitats and species determined locally as important for maintaining fish and wildlife populations over the long term.
Hazards, Natural and Climate	Natural hazards are naturally occurring physical phenomena caused either by rapid or slow onset events which can be geophysical (earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic activity), hydrological (avalanches and floods), climatological (extreme temperatures, drought and wildfires), meteorological (cyclones and storms/wave surges) or biological (disease epidemics and insect/animal plagues).
Health Equity	The attainment of the highest level of health for all people. (Healthy People 2020)
Healthy Disparity	A gap or difference in health status between different groups of people, including race, income, education and geographic location. This health difference is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. (Healthy People 2020)
High Capacity Transit Communities	A regional geography within VISION 2050 that refers to cities and unincorporated areas that are connected to the regional high-capacity transit system.
High-Capacity Transit Station Areas	Areas within ½ a mile of existing or planned light rail and streetcar stations, commuter rail stations, ferry terminals, and within ¼ mile of all bus rapid transit stations.
High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)	A motor vehicle with two or more people traveling in it. Includes carpools, vanpools, and transit. A *high-occupancy vehicle lane* refers to a highway and arterial lane restricted to vehicles carrying multiple occupants or passengers (with the exception of motorcycles).
Historically Marginalized Communities	Include, but are not limited to, native and Indigenous peoples, people of color, immigrants and refugees, people with low incomes, those with disabilities and health conditions, and people with limited English proficiency.
Housing Affordability	Refers to the balance (or imbalance) between incomes and housing costs within a community or region. A common measurement compares the number of households in certain income categories to the number of units in the market that are affordable at 30% of gross income.
Incompatible Land Uses	Facilities or activities on a site that have negative effects on adjacent properties.
Indian Reservation Lands	Reserved homelands that are subject to the jurisdiction of each tribal government and have immense value as the home of the region's native cultures and traditions.

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Infill Development	Projects that use vacant or underutilized land in areas that were previously developed.
Intelligent Transportation Systems	The application of advanced technology to current transportation problems, including incident detection, signal coordination, real-time information, and other technology.
Jobs-Housing Balance	A planning concept which advocates that housing and employment be located closer together, with an emphasis on matching housing options with nearby jobs, so workers have shorter commutes or can eliminate vehicle trips altogether.
Joint Planning	Cooperative planning between two or more jurisdictions or agencies.
Level-of-Service Standard	Measures of the minimum amount of a public facility that must be provided to meet that community's basic needs and expectations. The Growth Management Act requires jurisdictions to establish LOS for transportation-related facilities (RCW 36.70A.070(6)(a)).
Living-Wage Jobs	Jobs that pay enough to meet the basic needs and costs of supporting a family or individual independently. Factors for determining living-wage jobs include housing, food, transportation, utilities, health care, child care, and recreation.
Local Centers	Centers that are designated in local comprehensive plans and provide local gathering places, serve as community hubs, and are often appropriate places for additional growth and focal points for services.
Low-Impact Development	Site design techniques to maintain the natural, pre-developed ability of a site to manage stormwater. More broadly, it refers to a range of development techniques that have minimal environmental or energy-related impacts.
Manufacturing/Industrial Center	An area of intensive manufacturing and/or industrial activity formally designated by PSRC. Manufacturing/industrial centers include concentrations of industrial land use, employment, and freight infrastructure.
Major Military Installations	A regional geography within VISION 2050 that refers to installations with more than 5,000 enlisted and service personnel.
Metropolitan City	A regional geography in VISION 2050 that refers to one of the area's five central cities: Bellevue, Bremerton, Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
The federally-mandated forum for cooperative transportation decision-making in a metropolitan area.

Middle Density Housing
A range of housing types – from duplexes to townhomes to low-rise multifamily developments – that bridge a gap between single-family housing and more intense multifamily and commercial areas. The relatively small share of these housing types is sometimes called the "missing middle."

Mixed-Use Development
Projects or districts that include residential, commercial, and business accommodations. Vertical mixed-use development refers to buildings that have multiple uses in a single structure, such as ground-floor retail, offices, and residences. Horizontal mixed-use development refers to districts where zoning allows for different uses to be in adjacent buildings and complexes.

Mode
A particular form of travel. For example, walking, bicycling, driving alone, carpool or vanpool, bus, train, ferry, or airplane.

Mode Split
A term that describes the relative number of people using various forms – or modes – of transportation. Frequently used to describe the percentage of people using private automobiles as opposed to the percentage using transit.

Monitoring
An organized process for gathering and assessing information related to achieving established goals and policies. The process uses *performance indicators* to show progress toward, movement away from, or static state in policy implementation or policy achievement. Implementation monitoring tracks whether agreed-upon actions are taking place. Performance monitoring assesses whether desired results are achieved.

Multimodal
Those issues or activities which involve or affect more than one form – or mode – of transportation, including transportation connections, choices, cooperation, and coordination of various modes.

Multimodal Concurrency
Addressing transportation system performance by taking into account land development and transportation solutions that provide alternatives to driving alone. Moves beyond the assessment of vehicle travel to focus more on the people-moving capacity of the system.

Multicounty Planning Policy (MPP)
An official statement adopted in VISION 2050 to provide guidance for regional decision-making, as well as a common framework for countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans. Multicounty planning policies are required by the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.210(7))

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Nonmotorized Generally refers to bicycle, pedestrian, and other modes of transportation not involving a motor vehicle.

Office of Financial Management State agency responsible for preparing population forecasts used by counties and their cities in development of local comprehensive plans.

Open Space A range of green places, including natural and resource areas (such as forests), recreational areas (such as parks and trails), and other areas set aside from development (such as plazas).

Particulate Matter A pollutant consisting of liquid and solid particles in the air, such as soot, dust, and smoke. Particulate matter pollution includes inhalable coarse particles of 10 micrometers or less in diameter (PM_{10}), and fine particles of 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$). These particles may pose serious health problems, such as heart and lung ailments, as well as environmental consequences, such as reduced visibility. Automobiles, particularly those fueled with diesel, are a significant source of particulate matter.

Pedestrian-Oriented Development The development and siting of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities in a manner that accommodates walking. Such development is intended to create more vibrant urban areas and to reduce dependency on automobile travel.

Potential Annexation Area An urban area adjacent to an existing city that the municipality has identified for future inclusion as part of the city. *(See also Affiliated Areas.)*

Preserve To maintain intact or unchanged. In environmental planning, to set aside an environmental feature or natural resource to prevent its alteration.

Pricing A strategy for directly charging users of transportation systems. It may be used to manage demand for the facility, cover costs, and/or achieve other policy objectives, such as optimizing facility use. Also known as *congestion pricing*, *value pricing*, and *variable pricing*.

Public Services Facilities and infrastructure, including sanitary and storm sewer systems, water supply, energy, telecommunications, public safety and emergency services, schools, libraries, and other facilities.

Puget Sound Clean Air Agency	A special purpose agency serving King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties and their respective cities and towns to ensure the residents of the region have clean air to breathe. Chartered by state law in 1967 (RCW 70.94), the agency works in partnership with the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington State Department of Ecology, and PSRC.
Purchase of Development Rights	Programs through which local governments restrict development by purchasing rights to develop from private landholders.
Quality of Life	A broad multi-dimensional concept comprised of two domains—"individual health and well- being", and "neighborhood livability". The first domain includes physical health and social, emotional and mental well-being. The second relates to those rich opportunities in our neighborhoods affording one to fully enjoy life, such as access to living wage jobs, affordable housing, reliable transit, good schools, safe parks and protected natural areas, etc. (CDC)
Regional Economic Strategy	The functional economic strategy for VISION 2050. It also serves as the federally required comprehensive economic development strategy for the four-county central Puget Sound region.
Regional Geography	Groupings of cities and unincorporated areas used for planning and growth distribution purposes in the Regional Growth Strategy. Regional geographies include Metropolitan Cities, Core Cities, High Capacity Transit (HCT) Communities, Cities & Towns, Urban Unincorporated Areas, Rural, Resource Lands, Indian Reservation Lands, and Major Military Installations.
Regional Growth Center	A mixed-use center formally designated by PSRC that includes housing, employment, retail and entertainment uses. Regional growth centers are pedestrian-oriented, which allows people to walk to different destinations or attractions and are well-served by transit. Regional growth centers are planned for significant additional growth.
Regional Growth Strategy	The approach for distributing population and employment growth within the four-county central Puget Sound region.
Regional Service Provider	A district that provides a service to a multicounty area, countywide, or to an extensive subarea within a county.
Regional Transportation Plan	A detailed 20-year transportation plan that guides future regional investments and responds to legal mandates contained in federal transportation legislation, the Clean Air Act Amendments, the Washington Growth Management Act, and Regional Transportation Planning Organization legislation.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization	Under state law, the body responsible for long-range, region-wide transportation planning. PSRC serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the four-county central Puget Sound region.
Renewable Energy	Energy sources that can be regenerated and that are much less polluting than nuclear power or fossil fuels, such as wind, solar power, biomass, and hydropower.
Renewable Resource	A natural resource that can regenerate, either by itself or with human help, over a short to moderate time horizon, such as fish, food crops, and trees.
Resilience	The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.
Resource Lands	Lands that support resource-based industries, such as timber harvesting and farming. Under the Growth Management Act, the collective term for forest, agricultural, and mineral lands. Also a defined regional geography in VISION 2050.
Rural Area	Outside the urban growth area, rural lands contain a mix of low-density residential development, agriculture, forests, open space, and natural areas, as well as recreation uses. Counties and adjacent small towns provide a limited number of public services to rural residents. Also a defined regional geography in VISION 2050.
Service District (Special Purpose/Service District)	Limited-purpose local governments separate from a city, town, or county government. Generally, they perform a single function though some do perform a limited number of functions. School districts and transit districts are examples of special service districts.
Single-Occupant Vehicle	A motor vehicle occupied by the driver only.
Solid Waste	Discarded material generated by individuals, households, organizations, and businesses.
Special Needs Housing	Housing arrangements for populations with special physical or other needs. These populations include: the elderly, disabled persons, people with medical conditions, homeless individuals and families, and displaced people.

Stormwater Management System
An infrastructure system that collects runoff from precipitation and redirects it from streets and other surfaces into facilities that store and release it – usually back into natural waterways.

Target (also Growth Target)
The number of residents, housing, or jobs that a jurisdiction is expected to plan for in its comprehensive plan. Growth targets are set by countywide planning groups for counties and cities to meet the Growth Management Act requirement to allocate urban growth that is projected for the succeeding twenty-year period (RCW 36.70A.110).

Transfer of Development Rights
A system that gives landowners the option of selling the rights to further develop the land. By selling development rights, a landowner gives up the right to develop his/her property, but the buyer could use the rights to develop another piece of land at a greater intensity than would otherwise be permitted.

Transit-Dependent
Individual(s) dependent on public transit to meet personal mobility needs (e.g., unable to drive, not a car owner, or not licensed to drive).

Transit-Oriented Development
The development of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities near public transportation. Such development is intended to reduce dependency on automobiles, as well as to improve mobility and access between residences, jobs, and services.

Transit Supportive Density
A concentration of housing and jobs within a defined area of land sufficient to support the frequent use of a given mode of public transit. The specific density that is considered transit

supportive will vary based on the transit mode, location within a transit system, and mix of uses.

Transportation Demand Management
Transportation demand management (TDM) helps people use the transportation system more efficiently through education, incentives, products, and programs that remove barriers to non-drive-alone modes such as transit, carpool, vanpool, walking, biking, and teleworking.

Transportation Improvement Program
The multiyear program of transportation projects for highways, transit, and other modes. The regional Transportation Improvement Program consists of projects and programs drawn from the Regional Transportation Plan, as well as from local plans and the transportation programs of other agencies in the region.

Underutilized Land
Land that is either vacant or could accommodate a denser level of development than currently exists, like a surface parking lot in a dense residential neighborhood.

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Unincorporated Urban Growth Area	Areas under county jurisdiction within the designated urban growth area. Such areas are expected to develop at urban densities, and annex to a city or potentially form a new city at some point in the future.
Urban Form	The physical characteristics that make up built-up areas, including the shape, size, density and configuration of settlements.
Urban Growth Area	The area formally designated by a county, in consultation with its cities, to accommodate future development and growth.
Vehicle Fleet	All motor vehicles in active use, including private vehicles and vehicles operated by public agencies.
Vehicle Miles Traveled	A measurement of the total miles traveled by all vehicles for a specified time period. For transit, the number of vehicle miles operated on a given route, line, or network during a specified time period.
Vulnerable Populations	People who are unable to avoid or have difficulty recovering from the impacts of hazardous conditions because of factors such as limited resources or impaired physical health.
Walkshed	The area around a transit center, either measured as one-half-mile radius, a 10-minute walking distance, or a combination of the two. Used to measure the area in which walking or biking can serve as viable way to access a transit facility.
Watershed	All of the land and water that drains toward a water body.
Working Lands	Lands that are used as farms, ranchlands, timberlands, and mines.

Reference Materials & Supporting Documents

PSRC VISION 2050 Background and Briefing Papers

Alternatives Draft Background Paper – May 2019

Annexation Briefing Paper – March 2019

Climate Change Background Paper – February 2019

Equity Briefing Paper – March 2019

Freight Briefing Paper – May 2019

Health Briefing Paper – March 2019

Housing Background Paper – June 2018

Regional Growth Strategy Background Paper – March 2019

Technology Briefing Paper – May 2019

Other PSRC Plans, Reports & Resources

Amazing Place: Growing Jobs and Opportunities in the Central Puget Sound Region – September 2017

Displacement Risk: Mapping Tool and Technical Documentation – July 2019

Growing Transit Communities Strategy – October 2013

Opportunity Mapping: Mapping Tool and Technical Addendum – July 2019

Plan Review Manual: A Resource to Assist with Plan Development and Review – including Certification – September 2010

Regional Centers Framework Update – March 2018

Regional Open Space Conservation Plan – June 2018

Regional Transportation Plan – May 2018

Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program – 2019

Taking Stock 2016: Regional and Local Perspective on Local Plan Updates and VISION 2040 Implementation – March 2017

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Other PSRC Plans, Reports & Resources (cont.)

Transportation Improvement Program – 2019

VISION 2040 Final Environmental Impact Statement – March 2008

VISION 2050 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – February 2019

Other Reference Materials

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency – June 2018

Growth Management Act. Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A

Open Space Valuation for Central Puget Sound. Earth Economics – May 2015

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations. RCW 47.80

Regional Transit Authorities. RCW 81.112

State of the Sound. Puget Sound Partnership – November 2017

Target Zero: Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Washington Traffic Safety Commission – August 2016

Washington State of Knowledge Report – Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Washington State: Technical Summaries for Decision Makers. Climate Impacts Group University of Washington – December 2013

These and other materials may be obtained by contacting the PSRC Information Center at 206-464-7532, infoctr@psrc.org

Growth Management Policy Board

(as of draft VISION 2050 GMPB Recommendation, December 5, 2019)

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