Spring 2005 Leader Focus Group Findings

In addition to the Environmental Justice Demographic Profile, and GIS analyses of both Destination 2030 and the 2005 – 2007 Regional Transportation Improvement Program already completed by PSRC, it was recommended that the Regional Council conduct workshops with community leaders in a focus group format to identify priority EJ concerns and needs, allow PSRC to leverage existing communications networks to inform and involve the broader population, provide additional information that might be necessary future research and public outreach, and identify effective communications strategies to assure that environmental justice populations are engaged in the update of VISION 2020.

The focus group format was judged to be the most effective and productive way in which to identify issues and concerns of low income and minority communities. They were also seen as a way to validate information obtained from secondary sources such as U.S. Census Bureau data. These focus groups, called “Community Leader Workshops,” would include leaders and social service providers from EJ communities in all four counties.

In Spring 2005 PSRC conducted one workshop in each of Pierce, King, Snohomish and Kitsap Counties. Participants included a cross section of minority and low income leaders from various county locations. They included individuals active in community development, economic development, housing, environmental and referral services for low income residents.

The workshops addressed the following topics:
- Presentation on VISION 2020 update
- Presentation on Environmental Justice and goals of PSRC EJ Outreach
- Discussion on key areas of interest in VISION 2020
- Discussion on areas in which communities could be impacted, either positively or negatively
- Discussion on perceptions of transportation needs
- Discussion of methods and venues for involving the broader EJ community
Key findings

The Environmental Justice Workshops offered rich insights into the issues of environmental justice communities. The full summaries of each county workshop are provided in Appendix 1 of this report. In addition to a summary of environmental justice community needs, this chapter is organized around the categories of policy feedback, outreach feedback and research, so as to track with the recommendations emerging from the workshops.

Summary of EJ Needs
The main interest of focus group participants was on the interrelationships between transportation, employment, and housing.

There was a consensus among all four focus groups that the availability of transportation to and from low-income housing sites is not convenient for users of that system, particularly disabled individuals. Need was expressed for more express buses to and from low-income areas, more frequent buses, later bus times, and greater access to transit. One participant in Snohomish County, for example, reported that many low income people are completely cut off from transit to the point that they can’t get into Everett for services and employment. Intercity and interstate connections were also said to be difficult for transit users.

Access to employment, education, and social services are all affected by the quality of transit services. In the King County meeting, it was said that even when employers were willing to pay workers a living wage, transportation to and from affordable housing was still prohibitively difficult, with long commutes contributing to rising child-care costs. A professor at Everett Community College commented that her students often cannot afford the transportation costs associated with school, and have to drop out. While some agencies have bus tickets available for free, that information is not widely disseminated. It was a general consensus among participants that outreach needs to be improved, so people know what services are available to them.

Focus group participants noted that housing was becoming increasingly expensive, with requests for rent and mortgage assistance rising precipitously. Concerns were expressed that the terms “urban village” and “mixed use” were buzzwords associated with higher income populations. Low-income housing was said to be an undesirable living situation that carried a social stigma.

Several participants expressed the opinion that zoning requirements can create an isolation of low-income residents from members of other socioeconomic groups in the community. Such a situation breeds crime, and safety concerns keep the communities from being livable and walkable. Development capacity in urban areas is also an issue. Participants supported allowing taller buildings on existing land to increase urban capacity.
Access to jobs for minority groups was another major issue. Kitsap County participants were particularly concerned about the way workers and jobs were matched up. They expressed concerns with rampant nepotism, saying that jobs often go to people with connections, rather than the most qualified candidates. They also expressed concerns that companies often don’t do sufficient outreach to minority populations and the agencies that help minority workers, particularly Blacks, find employment. Even in the midst of a nursing shortage, new immigrants with health care qualifications are unable to practice due to policy-related problems with the transfer of foreign credentials.

Some participants suggested that outreach should include youth, and people with HIV/AIDS, bad credit, those just released from prison, and recovering addicts. These people have a large stake in the development of successful communities. Access to health care, drug treatment, opportunities to get out of debt, and good employment is of particular concern to members of these groups. One participant in Snohomish County commented that the one methadone clinic in the area was nearly impossible to reach by public transit.

Seniors, particularly seniors of color, were another vulnerable group whose needs were frequently discussed. Often, seniors of color don’t feel welcome at existing senior centers. Transportation to and from senior events also becomes a problem, and those who don’t have access to cars often don’t get a chance to participate.

Policy feedback

In all discussion and in all counties, VISION 2020 policies are perceived to be on the right track, but they need to be augmented to avoid negative impacts on EJ communities.

For example urban density is sensed as positive and necessary to support the viability of both communities and transit, but participants suggested it must be accompanied by effective mechanisms to assure that affordable housing is available in urban areas at the same time urban density is being promoted.

Participants reported that a lack of affordable housing in dense urban areas has in some cases pushed low income people out to rural and unincorporated urban areas. Furthermore, some people who have been living in more affordable communities report that are starting to become displaced by urbanites seeking relief from housing costs. This trend is likely to become worse as federal housing subsidies shrink.

Lower income people are experiencing reduced access to transit as they are displaced to less dense or rural communities. This is particularly true of access during off-peak hours and for shift workers. On a related matter, a major concern was expressed about the growing distance between jobs and residences.
There was strong support expressed for environmental protection, even though there is not a high incidence of environmental activism among EJ communities. There is a sense that low income and minority people experience environmental impacts more severely than other people because of the location of communities, quality of housing stock, and the need to augment food supply with fish and shellfish from polluted areas of the Puget Sound.

There was strong support expressed for increased transportation funding, including for tolls—although it was felt that tolls need to be accompanied by good transportation alternatives.

The need for more frequent, off-peak, and rural transportation alternatives was strongly supported.

Engagement

It was the overwhelming consensus that awareness of VISION 2020 is low among EJ communities and participation through traditional venues, such as public meetings is very challenging, given competing demands.

Various factors contribute to the low level of awareness and engagement. These include:

- Public meetings are often held at times that are not convenient for low income people, especially those involved in shift work, or who must attend to family responsibilities.
- Other than in the very urban areas, the otherwise dispersed nature of EJ communities means that it is often difficult for them to access public transportation, which can be infrequent or non-existent.
- The countries from which immigrants come do not always value, and sometimes even punish civic engagement.
- Language or literacy barriers prevent non-English speaking people from understanding the content of comprehensive planning documents, even if they were interested in the topic.
- Many minority and low income people do not make the connection between comprehensive planning and their immediate priorities.
- Minority and low income people often do not feel comfortable or welcome in settings dominated by middle-class white people.
- Many minority and low income people do not feel their input is desired.
- Minority and low income people are often skeptical that their input will be taken into account.

That having been said, many immigrant and non-English speaking populations have active advocacy and support groups who can facilitate communications with their respective communities. These groups constitute a “communications infrastructure” that can serve as a trusted resource in facilitating the engagement of these groups.
Recommendations

Minority and low income communities appear to be impacted by comprehensive planning policy and its implementation in the same way that the general population is impacted, only more so. The research indicates that these groups often have less access to economic and social resources than the general population\(^1\). As a result, they become the most vulnerable as housing prices fluctuate, as transit service is curtailed, or as the economy dips\(^2\). Although there is high support for the policy goals of comprehensive planning among EJ groups, they are also the most impacted when those policies are not implemented in coordination with each other.

In addition to traditional ethnic enclaves and highly concentrated pockets of low income populations in Puget Sound central cities, our focus group participants also indicate that there is a growing wave of vulnerability throughout our urban areas. As housing prices increase in urban areas, people with lower incomes seek more affordable housing in outlying areas. This has an inflationary impact on housing in the outlying areas, which in turn puts pressure on those low income people who already reside in the outlying areas. This “low income sprawl” creates additional challenges in terms of access to transit and jobs.

The focus group participants strongly support the policy goals of VISION 2020 such as increased urban density, building more complete communities, transit oriented development, affordable housing, and the economic growth strategy. They fear, however, that those policies are not implemented in coordination with each other. In addition, as federal support for low income and affordable housing declines, it becomes more challenging to retain diversity in urban centers. As a result, low income populations in particular have increasing difficulty in reaching employment centers, especially service and shift jobs that are not necessarily scheduled during normal commuter peak hours.

1. **Public Outreach.**

   Based on the outcomes of the Community Leader Workshops, PRR will provide in a separate report, specific recommendations for public outreach methods that will be effective with low income and minority populations. More generally, PSRC should:

   - Establish on-going relationships with EJ communities by augmenting the existing Environmental Justice Advisory Committee with a multi-county representatives who work closely with EJ populations.

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1 Center for Housing Policy. 2005. *Paycheck to Paycheck; Wages and the Cost of Housing in America.* Washington, DC: Center for Housing Policy.

- Develop VISION 2020 informational materials with messages that focus on the day to day concerns of EJ communities, rather than on “policy-speak.”
- Conduct additional outreach through existing minority and low income organizations.
- Establish a presence at gatherings that are already likely to attract communities of color and low income people. Examples would be:
  - Community fairs and celebrations
  - Food Banks
  - Meetings of community organizations
  - The 211 referral system
  - Ethnic radio and newspapers
  - The United Way network
  - Paratransit providers
  - Social service agencies
  - Homeless shelters
  - Advocacy networks for low income and minority people.
2. Further research is recommended:

**Needs Analysis.** The PSRC should continue to pursue additional needs analyses of low income and minority communities. In addition to direct research public agencies (social service, employment and transit) serving low income and minority communities have gathered a great deal of current data on housing, transit, and employment trends in the Puget Sound region. PSRC may wish to enrich its understanding of how policy decisions may impact EJ populations by turning to these sources. Because these populations are traditionally hard to reach, it will be useful to employ a full complement of information gathering tools so that the greatest opportunity for the widest range of community members to have input is achieved. Potential methodologies are summarized below.

- **Focus Groups and Workshops.** The major benefit of focus groups and workshops is that participants are able to hear each other’s responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses. The resulting synergy allows for insights to be reached that ordinarily would be missed with questionnaire or personal interview techniques.

  It is likely that the results of a regional survey of minority and low income community members will bring to light new issues that require a more in-depth understanding of both those issues and the community’s connections to those issues. A series of focus groups or workshops, perhaps dedicated to specific minority groups (or other relevant community segments) can be conducted to obtain this deeper understanding, as well as to obtain input/direction on potential mitigation efforts.

- **Key Informant Interviews.** Another method by which to obtain in-depth information is to talk in-depth with those who have special knowledge of or access to minority group and low income populations. These individuals are often those in the service sector, are directly involved with members of these communities and have special knowledge of their needs. Similar to the benefits of focus groups and workshops, these in-depth personal interviews allow one to probe deeply on issues that require a deeper understanding than that typically provided by standard large scale survey techniques.
Community Surveys. Surveys can be conducted in a manner that produces regional, generalizable data on the needs and perceptions of low income and minority communities regarding the regional vision for growth, the environment, transportation, and the economy.

Information obtained from the Phase 1 community leader workshops can provide direction regarding the types of issues to assess directly with representative samples of low income and minority community members in areas that have a high minority or low income population. Identifying such community members can be accomplished through the purchase of address and telephone number lists targeted to specific minority groups through ethnic surnames and/or zip codes identified with lower income households. The challenge of obtaining information from these often harder to reach populations can be addressed through a multi-method survey approach employing telephone, mail, online and interactive voice response phone survey methods. Providing multiple avenues through which community members can express their views increases the response rate and reduces sample bias.

Accessibility Analysis. The PSRC should consider conducting an accessibility analysis using its regional transportation demand model. In their accessibility analyses, peer regions often examined transportation projects and plans based on aggregate accessibilities in their travel demand models. This methodology relies on changes in travel times within large geographies to regional destinations, such as job locations.

When conducting any accessibility analysis, it will be important to be aware that the travel demand model should be evaluated and an assessment made regarding its usability in such an analysis. Decisions must also be made regarding the definition of “accessibility” itself. As in other regions, accessibility might be defined as an average travel time to work, an average travel time via public transit to a non-work destination, or another quantifiable definition supported by the travel demand model. As these questions are often intrinsic to the notion of the term “benefit” in accessibility analysis, it is important to attain a good understanding among stakeholders as to these definitions.

Human Health Impacts. Conduct additional research to focus on how VISION 2020 can address human health impacts of growth on environmental justice communities.
3. Policy and Policy Development Recommendations

- Incorporate environmental justice as a specific component for each of the VISION 2020 policy areas, because each area has significant relevance to EJ communities.
- Convene a working group to explore innovative tools and incentives for workforce housing and affordable housing development in both urban and rural areas.
- Convene a working group to explore new models for access to public transportation in rural areas, and incorporate those concepts into the VISION 2020 policy framework.

Conclusion

This study has reviewed the status of Title VI implementation nationally and has corroborated that continued community outreach is one of the most effective ways of identifying needs and potential impacts of comprehensive planning on low income and minority populations. Virtually all aspects of the VISION 2020 regional growth strategy touch very directly on the concerns and needs of these communities. Housing, land use density, transportation, the state of the environment, and economic development were all areas of high interest to Puget Sound EJ communities. In all areas, EJ populations appear to have less access to these core requirements of healthy community, and are most impacted when comprehensive planning policies are not implemented in conjunction with each other.

It is recommended that PSRC continue to address environmental justice in all aspects of its planning, including the update of VISION 2020, the future update of Destination 2030, the Regional Economic Strategy, as well as the Transportation Improvement Program. These should include community needs assessments in the form of public involvement efforts, surveys, interviews and focus groups, quantitative analyses using GIS or travel demand model-based methods, or other approaches to ensure that the goal of environmental justice is achieved.

In addition, PSRC should seize the opportunity to work in partnership with minority and low income service and advocacy organizations to reach those communities with messages that demonstrate the relevance of comprehensive planning policies to all segments of our society.
Social Service Representatives
Jill Kruger – Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities (TACID)
Ann Kennedy – Paratransit Services of Pierce County
Julie Dahlen – Tacoma Power
Catherine Forbes – United Way of Pierce County
Young Heong - Korean Women's Association (KWA)

Workshop Staff
Ben Bakkenta – PSRC
Rita Brogan – PRR
Todd Merkens – PRR

Summary:

Ben Bakkenta, of PSRC staff, began the workshop at 10:30

He introduced PSRC and that this is focused on Vision 2020, which is a guiding policy, help to guide cities, counties and the region to meet the growth management act. PSRC was challenged to look at issues beyond what they have traditionally explored. This workshop will help to guide outreach and messages. Parallel to Vision 2020 is also a process to update Vision 2030, which is the transportation side of this regional policy in guiding how we spend transportation dollars.

One of the questions to answers is whether the PSRC is serving the right peoples with the right investments?

The groups have brief introductions.

Jill Kruger- Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities.

Ann Kennedy– Paratransit Services of Pierce County. Paratransit Services serves 10 counties in western Washington with transportation for clients with Medicare.

Julie Dahline – Tacoma Power. She works with low income assistance.

Catherine Forbes – United Way of Pierce County. She works investigates local data in an effort to focus involvement in the community. The three issues they
have found as target issues in Pierce County are affordable housing, day care and getting kids ready for school, and access to health care.

Young Heong, representing the Korean Women’s Association.

Rita Brogan and Todd Merkens– PRR

Mr. Bakkenta showed the PSRC video on Vision 2020.

Rita Brogan started the discussion by asking what the awareness of Vision 202 by participants before this meeting.

Ann Kennedy, Jill Kruger, and Julie Dahlen had heard about PSRC but not Vision 2020, and weren’t too familiar with PSRC.

Catherine Forbes has shared interns with PSRC and knows quite a bit about PSRC.

Ms. Brogan continued by asking each participant what are their key areas of interest for their target communities.

Ms. Forbes mentioned her organization (United Way) has spent a year and a half getting to know the community through focus groups and data collection and analysis. It has become clear to them that housing and availability for affordable housing continues to be the big issue across the spectrum for the community, as shown in needs assessment research conducted over the last 10 years. Right now there are only 7,500 units on the ground and but there is currently a 10.5% poverty rate in the county. To date agencies in Pierce County haven’t been able to meet the demand for affordable housing and there is a need to look at the big picture. They have not able to leverage the resources that other communities (such as Seattle) have been able to.

Ms. Kennedy identified transportation to appointments for her clients as a big concern. Many of her clients have been driven out of the urban areas and this has pushed them beyond transportation options (transit routes, families, etc). At this time they may be able to get a ride to an appointment, but not to work or anything else. They are stuck!

Ms. Brogan mentioned that one of the polices in the Growth Management Act (GMA) is the issue of urban density, but Ann is saying that there are economic forces that work against the urban density goals of the GMA.

Ms. Forbes responded that every month people move out of the urban areas. The impact on the taxpayers is that they are now transporting them further and that they are no longer self-reliant after they move to more rural areas. When
you isolate children, that has an impact too, including depression, other problems, and feeling isolated.

Ms. Dahlen said she had the same perspective from the utilities side. She sees the costs as the issue. There is the need to improve the existing housing stock (most of which is run down, not weatherized, etc). There is also a need to make new affordable, energy efficient housing. Power rates are not going down or even staying stable. It is hard for seniors, or others who are on fixed incomes to deal with these changes. Tacoma Power, for example, will have a 7.2% rate increase in April. Ms. Dahlen said she gets daily phone calls from residents who can’t get in to get the energy assistance they need. The lack of transportation options affects customers who then have their power shut off, or their water shut off. Housing is a top priority for Tacoma Power and they are trying to be involved in the grass routes issues to improve existing house, get new, better units built, and increase accessibility.

Ms. Forbes added that they had looked at those issues and found that housing prices didn’t match average wages. It’s not just the comparison to neighboring Seattle; it’s even true for all the other neighboring counties.

Ms. Kruger mentioned that for people with disabilities, they don’t all want to live in Hill Top in Tacoma. That it is not safe there. Sometimes her clients are displaced because of behavior associated with their disabilities and then they face long wait lists for their next housing option. There is a chronic need for disabled residents aged 18 – 62. For the most part in regards to housing for seniors, they have been able to hold their own, but even that won’t last for long. Ms. Kruger lives out in Eatonville and even there housing prices are going up too. She currently sees a big focus on housing for families with children. However, right now there is an imbalance in housing for those with children compared to those with disabilities. They are out of balance for what is available for single individuals.

Rita asked next whether Tacoma was the center for services, particularly for all the EJ populations. If so, what are the transportation needs?

Ms. Kruger mentioned that the Bus Plus program was just started in outlying areas (a deviated routes system).

Ms. Kennedy explained that Bus Plus is basic route, but will deviate if you call in advance. There are plans to expand this program more widely. It’s a big question of how to serve the outlying areas throughout the county. For those with special needs in outlying areas such as Roy, Eatonville, Yelm, they can call into Paratransit, even for non-medical needs. Somebody will come and pick them up and take them to the Roy Park and Ride lot where they can catch a bus. However, if they don’t want to take the bus they need to take an ADA shuttle.

Ms. Brogan asked why more low income people do not ride the bus.
Ms. Kennedy thought it was fear. There is an education gap; people are unfamiliar with the system and that is even worse if English isn’t their first language. Pierce County transit does have a cheat sheet for drivers with a few languages to cover essential communications, but they still can’t converse.

Ms. Brogan asked whether this is an issue closer to Tacoma too.

Ms. Kennedy responded that for Paratransit they are required to give them a bus pass first. Usually there is big resistance from their client, unless their clients are familiar with the system or have somebody who can educate them. Pierce County Transit, however, can’t train them all.

Ms. Dahlen wondered whether it was possible to train the trainer. Maybe bring in volunteers, especially for multi-lingual volunteers, and have them work with residents in the community who need help. There might be a grant for such a program.

Ms. Kennedy added that Salem Transit has done just such a program. You have better luck if you have somebody who can more relate to your needs, and it’s less expensive.

Ms. Kruger said there is frustration for somebody who lives right off the line. It is tough for somebody to get picked up and taken to a bus line and then have to deal with taking the bus. The time factor can be hard when a shopping trip can take five hours.

Ms. Forbes referred to a study conducted in Puyallup regarding issues for seniors. Transportation was listed as a consistent concern (not even as big as a food bank which is used by one in 6 in this same area!). It is an unmet need that is so important to the health and quality of life. Medically it can be very tough for somebody to ride two hours on a bus. It isn’t necessarily an income factor either because the number of seniors in this in poverty is 7.2%, which is low compared to other populations in the same area.

**Ms. Brogan asked why people are living in isolated communities.**

Ms. Kruger responded that for some, it’s history and wanting to age in your own home, and for others it’s the results of being driven by economic forces. Pierce County is the housing source for working families from Seattle and that means that local working families are displaced.

**Ms. Brogan asked about is improved transit service between Seattle and Tacoma.**
Ms. Forbes noted that 100,000 residents drive out of the county to get a living wage job. The local housing is marketed to people from Seattle who want lower prices, and is therefore driven by costs from other communities, not necessarily by the costs of the local community. Even when there is great transportation to Seattle, our seniors can’t get to services to meet their needs.

Ms. Kruger said that dignity is an issue too. Right now we don’t have the housing and we don’t have transportation. The messages we’re giving to people is that they have second-rate transportation and no housing. Those messages are very degrading and a real problem.

Mr. Bakkenta asked whether residents would live in more dense areas if it were more affordable?

Ms. Dahlen responded that safety was a big issue and that many don’t view urban and dense areas as safe, especially the Hilltop area.

Ms. Kennedy mentioned that people prefer a house if they can find one. If they can rent a house in a rural area they will take that over a duplex in a dense area.

Ms. Forbes noted that the City does not seem receptive to the idea of quality affordable housing in the urban core.

Ms. Brogan whether traffic was also an issue or just transport.

Ms. Kennedy said that on Meridian Avenue, drivers are always stuck in traffic and there is a big problem on other surface streets. Kids are staying home after school alone because they have no way of getting to an after school program when there are no transportation options and when their families can’t leave work because they would be stuck in traffic too long.

Ms. Brogan asked next about land use issues.

Ms. Kruger mentioned that residents would rather be in the core area, but want a more safe area. Ms. Kruger responded that most people think they can’t live in downtown Tacoma. They may not want to live to far out, but they want a better school district and to avoid gang members. Hill Top is improving, but people still don’t feel safe there.

Ms. Brogan asked about transportation funding. How would more taxes or tolls or other user fees would impact low income and minority populations?

Ms. Kruger said that there already are impact fees from some new housing developments, and would prefer that this source of money be used to fund transportation.
Mr. Bakkenta noted that this is a one-time source of money and does not provide a longer-term flow for maintenance and operations.

Ms. Kruger said that she hasn’t seen improvements done to roads from developments even though the traffic increases.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that people in Pierce County feel a lot of frustration that King County appears to get a bulk of the money to fixed their issues, noting that there is also an entire state that needs attention. People are moving to the Kitsap area and everything that is being funded by the people who live there, not by state money. King County has a lot of resources; the rest of the region doesn’t get the same money, where is the fair distribution?

Ms. Kruger mentioned that politically, the Master Builders have a lot of pull.

Ms. Dahlen said that builders continue to build and that traffic is the biggest issue. What is being done about neighborhood traffic?

Ms. Forbes commented that this is a tax sensitive community and that the polling for tax measures is not good, especially when it comes to transportation. They don’t see that it will help them. Mass transit is great for people who need to get back and forth to Seattle but this still doesn’t change life on the surface streets.

Ms. Brogan asked whether land use and containing urban growth management makes sense.

Ms. Forbes thought yes and others nodded.

Ms. Brogan reaffirmed with the group that urban areas need to be more safe if they are to be successful residential areas.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that Korean Women’s Association has an extensive transportation network to bring seniors together. They are using private dollars and volunteers to address what is a community issue.

Mr. Heong commented that seniors, because of the language barriers, tend to live in the same areas as others with the same language. This grouping makes transportation easier because destinations are more predictable and closer together.

Mr. Bakkenta asked whether is it the language barrier that discourages immigrants from using transit options.

Ms. Kennedy noted that this was not especially the case with the Korean community. However, this was a really big issue with the Hispanic community.
The Korean Women’s Association has a unique and wonderful program, which serves their community well.

Mr. Heong said that the Korean community doesn’t use public transportation much because of language challenges and the anxiety of being in a face to face situation when they can’t communicate. In Korea, buses are very different: they are more frequent and have more clear routes and stops. Here there is a big concern about where to even get off the bus. Mr. Heong noted that the Korean community has defined centers and that there is a need for more frequent routes with circulations. Frequently the church is the community center, and a bus system around those locations would help.

Ms. Brogan asked whether this was the same the Hispanic community.

Ms. Kennedy said that in Thurston county Hispanics will not use the bus. There is an effort to train Hispanic-speaking drivers to help educate residents so that they can get their community to use the bus. However, getting drivers up and running is a slow process. If you can get drivers to be fluent in the community language you can get the community to participate. There is a fear of getting lost and how to get home. It’s the same for us if we go to a different country.

Ms. Brogan asked next about economic development. One issue that was mentioned was job access, for the communities you work with, what are the biggest issues.

Ms. Forbes noted that Work First is going away and that all the transportation dollars associated with this program are also being taken away. Although the program was only able to serve a limited number of people, those who did participate were getting training and jobs. That was one of the goals of the program: to get off welfare. What options are there now?

Ms. Brogan asked about the economic development concerns of disabled people.

Ms. Kruger answered that the discrimination for hiring is a big concern. For the homeless, being labor ready is the issue. A lot of people can’t find their way out of homelessness. It would be good to have a step two instead of being forced to come back every day to a for hire site. It would ideal to get a longer-term job. There is frustration that there are not more jobs in our area.

Ms. Forbes said the problem is that the education level in Pierce County is lower than neighboring counties. Drop out rates are comparable to neighbors, but small business employees most of the local work force.

Ms. Brogan asked whether there are opportunities for bigger businesses.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that they don’t have a workforce that attracts big business. The city is changing the intensity of its focus on economic

development and she wonders where Tacoma and Pierce County are going to get the leadership to attack the big businesses. Thousands of small businesses aren’t located where housing and transportation are. There is a big disconnect between what we’re able to grow and what we need. We lack high paying jobs and we’re drifting into a service economy. She noted that 21% of Lakewood employment is in service, low wage jobs. Land use is bad there too. She is concerned that the community isn’t stepping up to do economic development.

Mr. Heong said that for many of the people he works with, the father and mother sacrifice their lives to make a better life for their children. He said that many have come here because of the cost of educational institutions in Korean. However, it is hard to find jobs even with an education because of language barriers. There are training options, but the information isn’t easily accessible to the Korean population.

Ms. Dahlen asked whether Koreans have a high literacy rate. Mr. Heong responded that the Korean literacy rate is very high. However, right now there is not a large enough Korean population to be their own economic engine.

Ms. Forbes noted that affordable education isn’t available in Pierce County. The expansion of UW-Tacoma is really essential because right now we have a brain drain. Children don’t go to school in the county and won’t come back because they can’t afford to live here or work here. When the law school left, Pierce County lost another educational outlet to attract employers.

**Ms. Brogan asked for other economic development thoughts.**

Ms. Dahlen mentioned that getting the employers to recognize that aging workforce was essential. She wondered where are they going to attack new workers? Right now there are 200-300 applications for one admin position, but the technical positions will need filling as many of them will retired soon.

Ms. Forbes said that from what she’s read and heard, there is a big need for people in the trades, such as electricians and plumbers. High school students aby not focusing on trade or vocational schools. Schools have done a bad job in talking about these jobs, but there is a need for these jobs. We’ll be in a world of hurt if we don’t step up soon to meet this labor need.

Ms. Brogan asked whether zoning and land use can be used to help build prosperity in Pierce County.

Ms. Dahlen said that in the outlying areas people are unsure about is being allowed and not allowed under the Growth Management Act. These issues need to be worked out.
Ms. Kruger said it is her understanding that before growth management, builders rushed to put in permits to ensure “grandfathering” after GMA was enacted.

Ms. Forbes said that things were worse under the Growth Management Act for Pierce County and the city of Tacoma too. The GMA is lacking teeth, lacking a way to go back and report on whether or not it is working. There is a mismatch between ordnances, codes and the plan.

**Ms. Brogan asked than is the problem that the goal is fine, but that it’s not being implemented?**

Ms. Forbes responded that it is the right plan, but the tools are missing such as community land banking or incentives for density. She could not think of a single project where density incentives have been issued. They also lack a mechanism to accelerate use and we are back to big, single family houses.

Mr. Bakkenta asked what is the familiarity for people you work with on the Growth Management Act and that it exists?

Ms. Kennedy said that there is an unrealistic perception that this act solved the problems.

Mr. Heong mentioned that there is not awareness in the Korean Community about land use issues. Any outreach to the Korean community needs to start with the basics.

Ms. Kruger said there is always pressure at the state level to weaken the growth management act by the builders. In Pierce County we’re building large housing and schools in the path of a volcano, is that ethical?

Ms. Dahlen mentioned that in Pierce County, somebody who wants to put a sunroom with 350 square feet is denied, but somebody who wants to subdivide their property and not address traffic changes gets approved. Neighbors who want to put in an RV park can easily get that approved. There is a problem of inconsistent enforcement. People are not going to follow the rules or the law because it doesn’t matter in their eyes.

Ms. Brogan asked if you were both the Pierce County Executive and Pierce County Council, what would you change about housing policy.

Ms. Forbes said she would look at adding incentives, tools, teeth and doing a report card.

Ms. Dahlen agreed. If you have a development then make a percent that is affordable, making sure that the rules are being followed and there is teeth.
Ms. Kruger noted that we mitigate for wetlands when we displace them, but not when we displace handicapped persons when their facilities are shut down.

Ms. Kennedy noted that transportation must be considered in part of any approval. There must be a transportation plan, it's looking at the impact to the overall system, not just to the main road. It is important to tie any development to accommodating its own transportation impacts.

Ms. Kruger asked where is all the money that is being collected and why isn’t it being spent now? If we build housing we need to make sure some lower-income units are required.

Ms. Brogan affordable housing advocates have something in common with the development community.

Ms. Forces noted that the two groups have a very different definition of “affordable housing.” They would want to reduce regulation, which they feel would then lower costs for the entire spectrum. She noted, however, that the Master Builders Association isn’t the enemy. We have common ground, just as we do with the environmental groups. We lack common tools and mediation, such as a regional planner. We all want families who can afford their housing and be close to their kids.

Ms. Brogan asked that in regards to environmental quality and protection, what are the biggest issues for the communities with which you work?

Ms. Kruger said a major issue is clean water. There currently is trouble with water supply for city of Tacoma. There is one development being built around a super fund site dump and the housing there is having trouble with water quality. In addition, Puyallup wants more parks. For the Eatonville area the real change in the quality of life has been in regards to traffic on way to mountain. There is no decrease in traffic any more as seasons change.

Ms. Dahlen said traffic impacts and inversion layers were a concern. There is such a large number of people and cars per person and that has a real impact on health.

Ms. Kruger noted that very little is being done in Pierce County in regards to traffic improvements, that nothing is being widened.

Ms. Forbes agreed with what had already been said, especially water and parks.

Ms. Brogan asked whether the noise or air quality impacts of growth are a concern.

Ms. Kennedy noted that for asthmatics, pollution from vehicles is a major concern. At this point we’re going backwards in regards to a lot of things we
have tried to prevent from happening. Traffic is the cause, not the factory smoke stacks and this represents a big change in people’s minds.

Ms. Dahlen thought the price of gas needs to keep going up to that point where people will get out of their car.

Ms. Kennedy said that the availability of parking will be what gets people of their cars in Tacoma.

Ms. Dahlen said that more transportation demand management options for businesses would be helpful.

Ms. Forbes agreed that making parking more difficult would help.

Ms. Brogan asked how can TDM be more accessible to EJ populations.

Ms. Dahlen commented that education would be number one, somebody who speaks the language and can show by example. This will require more marketing and outreach.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that cross employers would be necessary, not within employers like is done in Seattle.

Ms. Kennedy noted that find a ride is coming soon, where you put in your address and where you want to and it will tell you how to get from A to B (www.findaride.org). King County is the only one set up right now and it needs to be more user friendly and address the language barrier.

Mr. Bakkenta wanted to know whether there is an internet access barrier.

Ms. Dahlen thought that this was certainly a concern more for people who are older.

Mr. Heong said this is also an issue for non-English speakers.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that not everybody has access, and more importantly lower income people frequently don’t have internet access.

Ms. Kennedy said that the find a ride system did not solve the issue for people who need it most.

Ms. Kruger agreed that most lower income and disabled residents do not have internet access.
Ms. Brogan asked what are the best methods for involving the broader community of EJ populations?

Ms. Kruger noted that Pierce Transit did some meetings and invited people, but the comments were not received well because they appeared to have the answers in mind already. She would like to see more peer to peer situations for disabled persons. There needs to be sensitivity to their concerns.

Ms. Dahlen commented that Pierce Transit should be invited to a meeting that is coordinated by services, rather than the other way around.

Ms. Kruger thought it would be effective if an outside entity could take charge and support the partnering.

Ms. Brogan noted that it is often difficult to attract minority and low income persons to public meetings. In the past she has gotten more input when she has gone to food banks or housing projects to “hang out” and talk to people. In Pierce County, where should we “hang out,” and who should we work with?

Ms. Kennedy noted that she goes to senior fairs, and posts brochures where they can reach a majority of groups. She has also gone to other senior cultural community events and that it was important to partner to make involvement more effective. Most transit led meetings have a flavor that comes across poorly; that the transit entity is going to tell you what they want to do and that is it. Participants needs to have more of a sense of control in a meeting that is all about their issues. Having a neutral facilitate who could take results back to the transit group would be more effective.

Ms. Dahlen mentioned that she finds that with low income and disabled seniors, will try be there, but are not always available because of inflexible schedules. There is a need to incorporate surveys with agencies and to fill out these questions when they are already located.

Ms. Brogan noted that survey questions needed to be thought through really well to be relevant to the audience.

**Ms. Brogan then asked about the policy issue of how to address people moving to Tacoma because of affordable housing, which is then reinforced with accessible transportation for their needs.**

Ms. Dahlen noted that it’s important to track how people get to where they need to go and how they would actually like to get there, more of a focus on needs. She also thought it would be important to make sure schedules were more user-friendly.
Ms. Forbes mentioned that more grass roots involvement is need. Above that involvement is solutions, and the key is finding partnerships at both levels. She mentioned that the human services coalition have three people receiving the same survey.

Ms. Brogan noted that it appears to be important to work through existing communications infrastructures.

Ms. Kruger asked why Pierce County can’t contract out transportation to meet specific needs. They could fit into the community’s needs not just what is convenient to the transportation model.

Ms. Forbes said that it is helpful to have a successful project to show an example. Pierce County has been “planned to death” and have very little to show compared to other communities. Pierce County residents feel they are the dumping ground, and until there is an example of success, that perception will continue.

Ms. Brogan asked what kind of project would be needed.

Mr. Bakkenta asked maybe cleaning up downtown. Ms. Forbes commented that new downtown residents are typically high-income people.

Ms. Brogan asked whether diversity is decreasing in urban core.

Ms. Forbes said that the transit project at the Tacoma Dome is something our community can talk about. Also, Sounder is good, but not for local residents. It’s only a “show me” when cleaning up the (Thea Foss) waterway for somebody who can afford the $1 million view.

Ms. Brogan noted the need for opportunities for participation by people who have varying levels of interest and understanding in long range planning issues.

**Ms. Brogan asked how we can best reach out to the Korean community.**

Mr. Heong said that he has lived for seven years in Tacoma. He knows there are regulations that govern him and the community, but the Korean community is not aware of their specifics. It would help if the officials would come to them or send them information through organizations. That would help facilitate involvement by the Korean community.

Ms. Brogan suggested that we can’t start talking about Vision 2020 and GMA, without providing people with more context.

Mr. Heong mentioned the need for the community to be educated through open houses and forums.
Ms. Brogan asked whether there is a tradition of attending community meetings in the Korean community.

Mr. Heong noted that about a year ago, many members of the Korean community attended a city council meeting in Lakewood, but that there is a need to learn how to express their opinions.

Ms. Brogan asked for other recommendations on how to conduct outreach to low income and minority populations.

Ms. Forbes noted that officials need to go to them, there are always meetings, but they aren’t going to come if it’s not welcoming. They may not even have been able to read the notice. You need to go out and start at the grass roots and listen to the concerns, and not sell your ideas.

Ms. Forbes mentioned that in Pierce County it would be helpful to go in with a partner. People are tired of token efforts. You have to go in with earnestness, follow through, and have to show something in that community. You can’t say “we need your input because you’re a person of color.”

Ms. Kruger noted that cut backs on weekends in transit service have been tough. Now people can’t recreate or go to church and that has had an impact on people’s quality of life.

Mr. Heong suggested that there are many points in the Korean community. Some groups have lost their credibility. One of the issues for the Korean community is to select a community leader who can play the bridge role to mainstream society.

Ms. Brogan noted that it is important to recognize diversity within communities.

Ms. Forbes said that United Way often work with tribes and there isn’t one person that represents the tribe. Each group has their own way of doing things. We have to understand how others work.

Ms. Forbes commented that the Russian community is often left out of discussions.

Mr. Bakkenta asked whether there is a physical concentration of Russian people in Pierce County.

Ms. Forbes responded that the Tacoma Community House and a Russian church are focus points, but that the population is very dispersed.

Ms. Brogan thanked everybody for coming and noted a summary would be passed around for review.
Mr. Bakkenta added that we’ll be developing this outreach program for all these issues over the next six months and we’ll be out there of for the next six years.

Ms. Kennedy requested to see summaries from the workshops in on Snohomish, Kitsap, and King Counties.

Ms. Forbes noted that each county has a United Way selective housing contact that can be helpful resource in upcoming workshops.

**PSRC EJ Workshop – Snohomish County**  
**United Way of Snohomish County offices**  
**May 27, 2005**

**Participants**
Kirin Vreeland – Community Services Advisory Committee  
Nicoe Hoyes – Everett Community College  
Edith Dial – Filipino Senior Association  
Tony Porciancula – Filipino Senior Association  
Sang Kyun Chong – Snohomish County Korean Seniors Association  
Bok Rok Oh – Snohomish County Korean Seniors Association  
Heather Villars – Snohomish County Workforce Development Council  
Albina Barba – Community Member  
Rosario Reyes – Las Americas Business Center  
Bill Brackin – Community Information Line  
Kate Reardon – City of Everett  
Winnie Corral – Lutheran Community Services, Mayor’s Advisory Council  
Fredrick Bletson – Snohomish County  
Kinuko Noborikawa – Snohomish County, Mayor’s Advisory Council  
Natalia Bologova – Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)  
Van Dinh-Kuno – Refugee Forum  
Anne Panchenko – Refugee Forum  
Therese Quinn – Interfaith Association of Snohomish County, Mayor’s Advisory Council  
Dennis Smith – United Way of Snohomish County  
Karen Crowley – United Way of Snohomish County  
Lynne Springer – United Way of Snohomish County  
Trish Lehr – United Way of Snohomish County

**Workshop Staff**
Ben Bakkenta – PSRC  
Rita Brogan – PRR  
Todd Merkens – PRR
Summary

Ben Bakkenta, of PSRC staff, and Rita Brogan began the workshop at 10 am. Ms. Brogan thanked everybody and also gave an introduction about the purpose of the workshop. She introduced Dennis Smith of United Way and thanked him for the help in recruiting for and hosting this workshop.

Dennis Smith thanked everybody for coming and gave a brief description of United Way of Snohomish County.

The attendees gave brief introductions.

Anne Panchenko works with the Refugee Forum through Everett Community College and works a lot with Russian and Ukrainian refugee populations.

Van Dinh-Kuno is the Executive Director of the Refugee Forum with Everett Community College.

Natalia Bologova works with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) mostly with Russian and Ukrainian populations who at this time make up about 90% of all immigrants to Snohomish County.

Kinuko Noborikawa is a member of the Steering Committee for Communities of Color she is also on the City of Everett Mayor’s Advisory Council on diversity.

Therese Quinn works for the Interfaith Association of Snohomish County and is also a member of the Mayor’s Advisory Council on diversity.

Fredrick Bletson is in human service for Snohomish County and the Chair of the community festival Nubian jam, a local African American event.

Winnie Corral is the South Everett neighborhood center program manager with Lutheran Community Services. She works with many Russians and Ukrainians and the family support center in Everett, and works for the Community of Color Coalition.

Bill Brackin works with the Community Information Line.

Trish Lehr used to work with Community Transit and is now in Human Resources for United Way.

Lynne Springer is also with United Way.

Heather Villars is with the Snohomish County Workforce Development Council.
Bok Rok Oh (as translated by Sang Kyun Chong) represents the Snohomish County Korean Seniors Association. He extended his appreciation for the workshop.

Sang Kyun Chong is also from the Snohomish County Korean Seniors Association.

Tony Porciancula represented the Council for Filipino Seniors and recently worked with the Council on Aging.

Edith Dial was a past member on the Council of Aging and is now President of Filipino Senior Association. She has been active to help seniors of all Asian Pacific locations.

Kirin Vreeland is a member on the Community Service Advisory Committee.

Karen Crowley, also with the United Way of Snohomish County, is the Vice President of the Community Matters Vision Council.

Rosario Reyes represents the Las Americas Business Center.

Albina Barba is a local community member and homemaker.

Ms. Brogan followed by reviewing the workshop ground rules.

Mr. Bakkenta introduced PSRC and stated that this workshop is focused on VISION 2020, the region’s multi-county planning policies that help to guide cities, counties and the region to meet the growth management act. As part of the update of VISION 2020, PSRC was challenged to look at issues beyond what they have traditionally explored. This workshop will help to guide outreach and messages for the project, as well as inform other work that PSRC undertakes. Parallel to VISION 2020 is also a process to update Destination 2030, which is the more detailed transportation action plan that implements regional transportation policy, and guides how we spend federal transportation dollars.

Ms. Brogan started by asking the attendees, by show of hands, how many heard of Vision 2020? (About a one-third of attendees had heard of the plan). She also asked how many of the attendees’ communities knew about Vision 2020. (None was the general answer). Ms. Brogan noted that many of this issues that are being addressed directly impact the underrepresented populations that the attendees work with. She noted that the workshop would first of all ask about the issues and then spend some time discussing how to best reach out to these populations.

Mr. Brackin wanted to know if the workshop also included low-income populations?
Ms. Brogan answered yes, they are included in the discussions of the workshop.

Ms. Dinh-Kuno reminded PSRC not to forget the English as a second language population. There is a very large population that doesn’t speak English, and many of who are not members of the communities of color.

Nicole Hoyes joined the workshop and introduced herself. She works for Everett Community College with the Multicultural Student Services.

Ms. Brogan asked the attendees what they would say are some of the key areas of interest to underrepresented communities.

Mr. Brackin said that one of the biggest challenges is lack of good public transit. There are not enough routes, not long enough service during the day, the services are not far reaching enough, and places people need to travel to and from don’t have service. He also noted that service between counties and across state lines are issues too.

Ms. Dinh-Kuno answered that it is commonly frustrating for those who are new to the area because they don’t have a driver’s license and don’t have bus options. She gave the example that it is difficult to take a bus from Casino row to Everett Community College (ECC), two local destination points.

Ms. Brogan asked if one of the issues is access to particular locations, like ECC.

Mr. Brackin added that employment and health care and even getting to agencies for assistance are all dependent on transportation.

Ms. Bologova commented that her clients have to wait for other people to get rides to where they need to go.

Ms. Reyes said that the timing of service for transit is not convenient. There is no bus at 12:00 am.

Ms. Corral added that there are also safety issues with transit services. Riders sometimes experience people from the community yelling at them while they wait for a bus.

Mr. Porciancula agreed with what had been said. The other day he had taken a bus from a car service center to ECC and had to wait about 20 minutes. Too his surprise only 13 people were on the bus. It seems to him that frequently the buses are not full and it is a waste of money.

Ms. Brogan asked if, in addition to access was an issue, there is also a question of how transit resources are being distributed.
Ms. Barba noted she liked to ride the bus and she wants her kids to use the services. Another concern paying high baby-sitting because of the long commute she faces everyday.

Ms. Bologova said that people with disabilities are very frustrated because they can’t get to the office for services. For them, bus access is difficult and they are stuck waiting for other to drive to take them the places they need to go.

**Ms. Brogan asked whether bus service is available everywhere it is needed.**

Ms. Vreeland commented that there are entire residential areas that do not have services. There seemed to be limited service to certain areas, and not service to others.

Kate Reardon joined the workshop. She is the Public Information Officer for the Mayor’s office.

Ms. Corral added that even the paratransit and dial-a-ride services are frustrating. She works with volunteers who rely on these services and they aren’t always able to have their needs met.

Mr. Smith noted that United Way tries to work with SNOTRAC (Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Coalition), and wondered whether this is ramping up?

Mr. Brackin responded that they did well this year in the state budget, but they are still so far behind because of the passing of initiative I-695 that they are nowhere near where they were in the past. SNOTRAC is a coalition for people with special needs, and that is about 40% of the Snohomish County Population, and growing. The group is trying to work with all the transportation providers to have them better coordinate and better use their resources. The Stillaguamish Tribe will provide transit in Stanwood and Arlington. There is a methadone clinic in Iron Cross with 300 people a day and there isn’t even public transit to get there. He noted that the communities aren’t using resources well. Some are making progress. For example, Mason County is now using deadhead school buses to help with other transportation needs.

Mr. Oh (as translated) said that intercity connections do not work well. This is also the case for the connection between county and city services.

Mr. Porciancuela gave and example for the need of senior transportation. He said that last month he attended a Filipino American seniors event but that only one bus was provided that has seats for only 20, forcing the rest have to carpool. Some couldn’t even make the trip. Socialization is important but difficult without the right transportation.
Ms. Brogan noted that the group has heard a lot about transit, that there is a need for more services and more efficient use of resources and creative solutions to accessing and providing services. She asked if there are other issues?

Mr. Bleston responded that there are families who are looking for jobs who spend a lot of money getting to and from interviews with bus services, many cannot afford it.

Ms. Bologova noted that her organization has but tickets available.

Ms. Brogan asked if there are services that not everybody knows about.

Ms. Reyes said that this is a perfect example that communities are not aware of what is available. There is a lack of access to information.

Ms. Brogan commented that it may be difficult for anybody to get information, but even more so with non-English speaking people.

Mr. Brackin said that the area will soon have a 211 service for special needs transportation. People will be able to dial this number from any phone in the state. The program will start this fall in King, Snohomish, Whatcom and Island counties. It will begin in other areas soon. There will be a special needs transportation hotline, and this service will be a clearinghouse for information and services, eventually creating a statewide database of services.

Ms. Hoyes echoed the issue of affordability. Her students can get aid for books and tuition, but they feel they have to be on DSHS to get a bus pass. She has had students drop out because they cannot afford to get to class.

Ms. Corral asked whether the 211 service will be attached to a language bank.

Mr. Brackin replied that the service will have 140 languages available, including Spanish and English bi-lingual staff.

Ms. Brogan wondered besides transit, whether the group would like to discuss other forms of transportation? She noted that the regional planning documents also address all the aspects of roadways including bike and pedestrian options. She asked the attendees whether transit access eclipses all other transportation issues? (There was a resounding yes).

Ms. Vreeland added that the area has good trails, but the trouble is getting to those trails.

Ms. Noborikawa noted that there are people who get to work by bike, and there are those in the community working on that option to be used by a larger percentage. Right now there is a lack of safe roads and a lack of access to...
bikes. Sharing Wheels is one program that has programs to teach people how to maintain bikes and then give them bikes. This effort is targeted toward children and seniors.

Ms. Quinn thought that some of the transit issues related to car travel would be minimized if the transit system were expanded.

Ms. Brogan noted that programs like Flexcar had been very helpful in some places for off-hours transportation. She then asked the group if there were other transportation topics that were important to discuss?

Ms. Reyes commented that transportation issues in the future will include safety and driver licenses for people who are undocumented.

Mr. Brackin added that in the scheduling of transit, one of the problems is that there isn’t a run at night and that cuts out opportunities for work and recreation. Also, for those who work shifts that end late, they can’t get a bus home, there is a disincentive to using the services and these people often drive.

Ms. Dial noted that at Everett Station the parking is not equal to the capacity. She has had trouble parking there while catching a bus to Seattle. There isn’t enough park and ride places.

Ms. Corral said that drunk driving is also an issue because there aren’t public transit services available.

Ms. Vreeland thought that having busses run later in the evening could help.

Ms. Reardon added that from the city’s perspective, including past public outreach meetings on expanded services at Everett station, there are plans in conjunction with ST to expand parking that will be happening in the next year. At this time there is more parking to the south, but you do have to walk for it. But that’s not to say that there isn’t something we can do for senior parking.

Ms. Brogan then shifted the discussion to land use, mentioning that it is very tied to transportation. She asked for the group’s thoughts.

Mr. Brackin said there is a need for affordable housing, but there is also a need to have both transit and safety included.

Ms. Corral added that there is also a need for planned spaces for families, seniors and that the communities need to be walk-able.

Ms. Bologova wondered why only build one or two story buildings when it might be better to build taller structures.
Ms. Brogan asked if people agree that there is a need for a greater supply of housing that uses less land.

Ms. Quinn asked if there could be an incentive for developers so that some of the housing is mixed throughout development so that clumps of similar people are not the result. She wants to encourage them to make affordable housing, and not $250,000, but something that lower and moderate-income families can afford.

Ms. Corral noted that there is also a balance of density that should be considered. In the Eastern US there are large blocks of public housing. People don't commonly want to live in a nine-story cube, especially since we typically put lower income people in those places.

Ms. Brogan summarized that members of the group seem to agree it is important that design quality shouldn't be limited to higher income people.

Ms. Dinh-Kuno noted the importance of also providing programs to help people get into housing, such as tools and access to loans for first time homebuyers.

Ms. Noborikawa stated that importance of defining what low income is. Snohomish County has two pilot programs that are self-contained programs; one is very mixed with housing and transportation. There should be a minimum percentage that is low-income housing depending on the needs of that community. Maybe shift that depending on the community.

Ms. Brogan summarized that members of the group appear to agree that targets for housing levels were important.

Ms. Noborikawa noted that Seattle has some great places like New Holly Park where they use different designs and different color schemes and people can make their places unique.

Mr. Porciancula said 20 years ago, when he came to Everett and was looking for a house, one place he liked was City of Everett public housing but their friends warned them about moving there. At this time he has friends that live in these developments and they are embarrassed about their living location and situation.

Ms. Brogan summarized that members of the group agree that strategies for involving everybody in the city, especially lower income, would be helpful.

Mr. Porciancula agreed that it would be good for self-esteem.

Ms. Reyes that that it was important to mix communities and was important for our global community.
Mr. Brackin added that zoning in Snohomish County does not allow for much creativity. We have no way for a development like community land trusts and cooperatives. As the costs of housing keeps going up we get increasing rent and mortgages assistant calls. Recently these calls have gone from 200 calls a month up to 350 a month.

Ms. Reardon commented that the Everett Housing authority has plans to move forward with integrating low-income housing within the community. She also mentioned the CHIP program that gives grants to low-income individuals for improvement projects to help upgrade housing. The challenge is that there isn’t enough money for the need. The City also has a program called “Art Space” to create places where artists live and work in downtown Everett. One concern is that the artists may someday market themselves out of the area, but the goal of this program is to create affordable housing that lasts for the long term.

Ms. Corral noted that as mixed-use communities are planned, we need to include community centers. Such places give people a reason to get to know each other.

Ms. Quinn said that parks are really important and that we should plan for these in the beginning so it is easy to incorporate recreation and support centers within the community.

Ms. Noborikawa said that the county is trying some new things, like the pilot project at 164th. The input from the public for this and other ideas is really needed.

Mr. Bletson added that Snohomish County is a very disconnected community. People need to come into the Mother Ship of Everett, and if people can’t get here they are lacking what they need. There used to be outstations in the rural places, money is an issue so those aren’t available any more. Employment, education, housing make up community development, and we need to have the conversation that includes those and includes all people like youth and the gay and lesbian communities. Cultural competencies are important. Is what we are making relevant to the cultures that make up the community? The community is made of the people who live there but the services don’t match those needs. Employment is important because so many jobs are leaving our community. Where are the jobs? How do you get the training? There isn’t the money to get the training. Housing is always an ongoing issue. I look at that triad (employment, education and housing) and I think in terms of those, they are all connected; you can’t do one without the other. There is always plenty of talking. There was a man John Brown who said talking is a national institution but it never freed the slaves. There needs to be investment to move forward. Right now the criminal justice system takes so much budget. But when those people get out they need housing and education. We need to free people and the money has to be allocated for these services and excuses need to be done away
with. We need to be creative as a community. What can we do and what are we going to do? Where am I going to live when I'm a senior? I am going retire and I'm not going to get enough to live so I might have to get a job.

Ms. Brogan said that the Growth Management Act includes a provision for “concurrence,” which says that there should be adequate roads and schools in place before growth occurs. However, it does not include discussion of affordable housing as a necessary condition for additional density.

Karen Crowley commented that Snohomish County fundamentally started as a bedroom community, and that is a hurdle that has pushed back as we try to make new ways to create community. Also, we need to talk about models in the City of Everett neighborhoods, and how do we take those to other areas in the county.

Mr. Porciancula said he thinks that the City of Everett is starting to bring people into the city. About 3 weeks ago the City Council approved re-development of an area for condos and he hopes that those will be low income. He thinks that it is ideal to bring more people into downtown so they can have a safe place as well as access to recreation and transportation. I hope that they can have a model like Vancouver, B.C. When the city approved that block for development, 1/8th of that block should be a green belt and I think it is just such policies that make Vancouver livable.

Mr. Brackin added that while this workshop is inclusive, the other groups that need to be included are: HIV/AIDS, homeless, and teenagers (they can’t even go places at certain times). We need to bring these groups to the table. Released offenders are another group. They want to make a good go at it, but they can’t because the services aren’t available to help them.

Ms. Brogan asked the group to next talk about jobs and job access. How would you characterize jobs and economic development in Snohomish County?

Ms. Panchenko said that more training and jobs are important. We keep hearing from companies that we don’t produce the workers that the companies need. We need to work side-by-side with the businesses so our kids get the training they need for our community to avoid outsourcing.

Ms. Brogan asked if there are other economic development issues?

Ms. Corral responded that the standard of living our county seems to have gone down, especially with high paying jobs outsourced and leaving. Our teenagers can’t get jobs because their parents are applying for the same ones.
Ms. Reyes thought that there is a need for better partnerships with the schools. Right now there are too many dropouts. We need to bring teenagers to this table because they are the ones who are living with these changes and the schools aren't making the efforts needed for these people. Somehow the schools need to be partnered with more.

Mr. Brackin added that in Snohomish County we have worked like crazy to bring in high-tech, high paying jobs, but what we need it somewhere in between, we need those mid-paying jobs. We haven't been focusing on those jobs that don't need a high tech degree or masters but are needed to support a family.

Ms. Quinn commented that more effort could be put into promoting women and minority owned businesses and helping them get federal and state projects in our county.

Mr. Bletson said that we live in an information and high tech society. He has Ukrainian friends who have training in another country. However, because of their limited English the job market is limited to them.

Ms. Villars said that what is being said is correct. There is a skills shortage for high tech jobs, but can't train people. We also have a nursing shortage. Right now we're at capacity in the nursing training programs.

Ms. Bologova added that there are many who come from other countries and their certificates and training aren't accepted. This is a resource that isn't being tapped.

Ms. Dinh-Kuno said that she would like to see scholarships available for lower-income students. They don't get grants but they also can't afford higher education.

Ms. Hoyes stated that today it takes a job that pays $17 to $18 an hour to support a family of 3. These are our students and right now we also loosing that brainpower.

Ms. Dial added that, in regards to income, she often asks herself, where she is on the scale? She added that Snohomish County is very diverse and thinks that a centrally located Asian cultural center could really bring the community together.

Ms. Brogan asked if a facility that could focus community efforts would be valuable.

Ms. Dial thought such a facility could include young people and others who can help other outs. Maybe it could also include a workforce resource.
Mr. Porciancula agreed with Ms. Dial. The Filipino Seniors don’t feel welcomed at the City of Everett Senior Center’s. A cultural center could remedy the depression and the isolated feeling many seniors experience. He also added that there are plenty of people who are trained overseas especially in the medical fields, but because of the state regulations they cannot practice here and they are not able to review for the tests to be certified, they feel handicapped. When they try to take the tests they often fail because they don’t have enough English or training. The government could give more funding to help them get certified. There are many nursing assistants who are trained as registered nurses.

Mr. Brackin added that in regards to the community center idea, we need community centers, beyond just cultural centers. I grew up with a park that had a center in it. Kids went there, they had sports and other activities. That center helped to turn a sprawling environment into a real community. That could really change things, and bring services to people.

Ms. Reyes agreed that such facilities would be helpful if it were possible to attract youth and also find a way to promote minority businesses.

Mr. Smith noted that self-sufficiency standards have broken down. What is needed are the middle-income jobs. In order to afford livability, many are working several jobs, so the kids aren’t being cared for and the cycle continues. Also, our groups have talked about the importance of creating the sense of neighborhoods.

Mr. Oh (as translated) noted that Korean seniors have also had a difficult time feeling welcomed in the Senior Centers, and because of this have not had the sense of community place they would like.

Ms. Vreeland wondered if it would be possible to create something for community services within mixed developments.

Mr. Bletson followed that until such a plan comes to fruition, you have family support centers that already exist. If we can partner and find ways to work with existing family support centers and find a model then everybody wins.

Ms. Corral said that the Asian Pacific Senior center sounds like a great idea, but that that building won’t answer the needs of the community and the neighborhoods. She thought it might turn into a museum where people take special trips. What is needed is space where people are vested and that provides services and other needs.

Ms. Brogan then asked if anybody from the group had concerns related to the physical environment in Snohomish County?
Mr. Brackin noted that credit has also become an issue. Many can’t even get a job without a credit check. Are we all so perfect that we need to be exclusive? Are we creating slum-land lords for people that don’t have any checks? We need to create places for people who have bad credit and are just out of jail. Right now we try to ignore them. We need to work with these people in our community.

Ms. Quinn said that in regards to environmental issues, more money needs to be spent to build proper drainage. Drainage issues haven’t been enforced in new developments. When homeowners buy a house because it wasn’t properly built sometimes they have to move out. Environmental issues sometimes are just swept under the rug. We can’t do this to low-income people.

Ms. Noborikawa said that she is a wetland biologist for the county and there has been a lot of pressure from developers that our guidelines are making housing unaffordable. We are being told that we need to relax those guidelines to make it affordable.

Ms. Brogan summarized members of the group agree that we need to continue to protect the environment.

Ms. Noborikawa added that people want to live here because of the environment. However, we’ve lost 90% of our estuaries and those are important to keep the Sound in good health.

Ms. Corral commented that low-income people are also impacted in regards to crime-related issues. Basic needs such as not being able to walk around at night, or more complex issues like methamphetamine labs.

Mr. Bletson said that not a lot of money or prevention. People can’t get credit or housing, and not just because of bad credit but also criminal records. There is need for an emphasis on education and prevention with our youth and those who are on the edge of credit and criminal consequences. They need to know what will happen as a result of their choices. Prevention is important for the community.

Mr. Smith noted that these issues are all interconnected. We have a sense of collective action. How can we as a society move forward? We’ll need dollars and public will as a start. While we’ve been talking about this, a tax revolt has been happening at the same time. This arena is one of the most quiet in the debate. We need to see the importance of this public voice. We need to move away from purely taking care of oneself to community cohesion.

Ms. Brogan summarized that collective action seems important to members of this group.
Mr. Smith added that the government wouldn’t stop and just ask us what the needs are and then give us the money to meet those needs. That won’t happen until we get out there and vote and are heard.

Mr. Brackin recounted his experience working on the Snohomish Comprehensive Plan. After submission, the County Council changed about three-quarters of the citizen’s recommendations, and now we’ve spent a fortune in lawsuits and haven’t gotten anywhere. We have spent so much money of studies. Part of the environmental issue is transportation.

Ms. Brogan acknowledged the suggestion that outreach expand to involve youth, those with criminal records, the homeless, the HIV/AIDS community, and those with credit issues. She asked if the group had any other advice for PSRC?

Ms. Quinn added that she would like to see more schools that have volunteerism as a requirement for graduation. Such activities would help build more attachment to the community among students.

Ms. Hoyes followed that grass routes political advocacy was important. With just a few subsidies, people could live on a lower ages.

Ms. Corral agreed schools need to be more part of their communities. Most aren’t a part of the community. There is not enough outreach to parents and also to the communities at large.

Ms. Reyes thought that using the schools more effectively would be a big help. If we were able to get our kids trained, everybody would benefit.

Ms. Brogan said that this effort will develop an outreach plan and she hoped partnerships could develop between PSRC and the attendees of this workshop. She heard the group saying, “We don’t want just talk, we need to connect to action and solutions.” She added that a draft first of the workshop summary will be sent out to participants for their review. Once complete, this will be followed by a combined report and outreach strategy with specific recommendations that can be addressed in the Vision 2020 update.

Ms. Noborikawa asked whether the recommendations in Vision 2020 will be followed once developed?

Ms. Brogan answered that once they are adopted by PSRC they become part of the regional plan.

Mr. Bakkenta added that regional planning under Growth Management Act policies direct counties and local jurisdictions. We can broadly coordinate across the four county region.
The workshop ended at approximately 12:00 pm.
PSRC EJ Workshop – Kitsap County
Sheridan Park Community Center
April 19, 2005

Social Service Representatives
Dr. Estelita Muldong-Tantay – Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church
Lennie Meder – Ethnic Unity Coalition
Robert Boddie – POWER
Fil Abille – Pacific Northwest Ilocondia
Ray Rogers – NAACP

Workshop Staff
Ben Bakkenta – PSRC
Bruce Brown – PRR
Todd Merkens – PRR

Summary

The workshop began at 4:40 pm.

Attendees were thanked for coming. A brief introduction was presented to introduce PSRC and its work. The purposes of the workshop were identified: 1) to gather information from the attendees to make sure that PSRC is capturing everything as they move forward with planning, and 2) to identify how to interact with EJ populations over time, and how PSRC can involve these groups more effectively.

Introductions were given around the table.

Bruce Brown began by asking the group what understanding they had of the Vision 2020 update?

1) There was a manual from the county that discussed growth management forecasting. We in the ethnic sector think that people of color are underrepresented and need to be part of policy making decisions, we need to be part of this community. We want to participate because our lives are being discussed.

2) We’re trying to do good things for the community, but we’re not involving the entire community. For example, the Navy is trying to diversify its workforce, but they aren’t working with the right people. We all want economic growth, but everybody wants a piece of the pie. We need to see more minority contractors and workers. That is also an issue in the education arena. We need inclusion of all during the growth of the community.

Mr. Brown then asked if these concerns were especially important in Kitsap County?
1) The effort of involving us is unique because the ethnic sector is only 10% of the community and we are not often asked to be involved. We’re hesitant to come out and participate. Right now you always see the same ethnic group leaders. There needs to be more effort by the county. We’d like to participate on the school board and other bodies.

2) I may have seen the vision going around, but I’m not sure which vision this was? I wasn’t sure whether this was from the county or PSRC. I may not know which is which? I’m still not sure who PSRC is?

Ben Bakkenta discussed the efforts of PSRC, including the handing out of Federal transportation dollars. He also mentioned the economic development board that focuses on economic development money that PSRC grants out to public works projects.

1) How do EJ populations currently work with PSRC?

Mr. Bakkenta mentioned that PSRC planning documents are currently silent on the issue.

**Mr. Brown asked what the key areas of interest were for the local minority communities?**

1) Jobs for our youth are a big concern. There are not many minority owned businesses. The lack of adequate education is a problem. Even now we’re always fighting to open doors. Those that achieve and succeed commonly leave. We have to ask what do we tell and show the people of this community? We are always fighting a battle, maybe a loosing battle. We don’t see many minority community leaders, and that’s what the kids see.

Mr. Brown mentioned that Kitsap County may be unique because it’s one thing for PSRC to look at the ethnic communities, but even at a local level there doesn’t appear to be the representation and involvement.

1) Social justice has to be part of any growth management plan. We have to look at education. A lot of people haven’t chosen to get involved and we don’t know why. Things have changed, but very slowly. Effort needs to be directed toward how to take advantage of decision making and being part of the solution instead of being part of the problem.

2) We need to install faith back in the community. People think jobs are unreachable. People don’t apply for jobs. Many fear they don’t get a fair shake.
3) I can’t vote for mayor, even with a Bremerton address, because I live outside of the city limits. I can offer help but that only goes so far. I can only vote for county officials. If we can’t vote, how can we make changes in the community?

4) The whole process is that all of us are responsible for the visions that we have, but there isn’t much interaction between all the ethnic groups. We all need to collaborate to provide information between each group. There needs to be collaboration between county, city and the ethnic communities. There needs to be a process in the place. The county officials need to listen to this and be aware of what our needs are. In the Philippine community, we have jobs, but in the African American community jobs are a real issue. Each community has their own issues, but we also need to have dialogue between our different groups. How can our ethnic community be strengthened without more interaction between the different groups?

Mr. Brown mentioned that with combined efforts, there might likely be a stronger voice.

He commented that there seems to be an opportunity to educate PSRC and to lay out policy so these groups can be a voice to bring back the policy to the city and the county.

Mr. Bakkenta followed that the degree on how this planning is directed can bring policy back to the county.

1) A lot of agencies receive money but the feeling is that the money doesn’t often get to the where it’s supposed to go.

2) If you follow the money you can get something done. We don’t always know what services are available because agencies don’t reach out to let us know what is available.

Mr. Brown said that it was important for PSRC to see the impacts that could happen negatively and positively. He then asked to focus on the areas that are a primary part of Vision 2020. He asked what were the big transportation issues in the local community that PSRC should be aware of?

1) From my point the view, the buses don’t run frequently enough. They stop service at 9 pm. In some cases the buses only run to areas of underrepresented populations three times a day.
Mr. Brown asked whether access to transportation for elderly or children was a concern? He also asked whether there were not enough stops and whether Paratransit was available?

1) Paratransit is good in this area.

2) One population that is underserved is the Kurdish population in Poulsbo. They have a big language barrier. That’s one of the refugee groups that needs to be included. The growth of the ethnic community has been 10% in the last 10 years, the largest being the Hispanic community. How are they being serviced with their language barrier? The Philippine community, except for seniors, has mobility because they have jobs.

3) Another issue in regards to transportation is handicapped ID cards that allow riders to get a low fare on the busses. Currently there are only limited places where these are available and that is very inconvenient for some.

4) What does transportation really cover? What is the scope of transportation?

Mr. Bakkenta responded that PSRC funds roadways from local streets to freeways, ferry services (including both foot and auto), Sound Transit, buses, bike and pedestrian facilities (such as sidewalks and bike lanes), regional trails, air quality benefits and intercity rail (Amtrak).

Mr. Brown asked the attendees when they think about all these transportation features whether there are specific issues in Kitsap County that PSRC should be aware of? He noted that Kitsap is more of a rural county.

1) Where I live, in more rural Kitsap County, transportation accessibility is an issue. When it comes to the winter, our transportation system seems to shut down. How consistent is the service? If there is an elderly person who needs transportation, there isn’t a service available to them. Paratransit needs to be involved more in the planning in these areas so services are available.

2) I still go back to economics and jobs. Many African Americans have jobs; few of them have good jobs. In this county we’re moving into a growth serge. Many from Seattle see the area as a place of affordable housing, which is making housing less affordable when they move here. This increased growth is also bringing congestion.

3) Kitsap Way and Wheaton Way are always congested.
Mr. Brown mentioned that there are projects coming from WSDOT, including an HOV lane from Silverdale. He asked how do agencies make sure these projects don’t impact ethnic communities negatively?

1) SR 303 is terribly congested. Weekends in Silverdale are really bad.

2) We’ll need more lighting if there will be more projects. Right now there are a few dark but heavily traveled roads.

Mr. Brown asked what would be the concerns if it were the case that construction happened in areas of ethnic communities?

1) We’re so spread out that there are no centers of ethnic communities.

2) Right now in Bremerton there is a poverty rate of about 50%, and this includes all kinds of people.

3) Development typically stays away from low-income areas, even if we did have low-income. Right now ethnic communities are very spread out.

Mr. Brown then asked what the attendees imaged to be the economic impact on low-income people from taxes to pay for transportation improvements?

1) Everybody is concerned about taxes, especially higher taxes. If you’re a property owner, you’re concerned about taxes, but you also want to increase real estate equity with increased infrastructure.

Mr. Brown asked how ethnic communities might handle tolls? He noted that there are not any at this time, but they will be coming in the future, most notably with the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

1) Business will be growing here to keep people on this side of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.
Mr. Bakkenta noted that nobody had yet mentioned ferries. He commented that the state legislators from the Kitsap area are always talking about ferry service. He asked how the service was, whether the private service was working well and what was the dependence?

1) I support the ferry system, controlled growth is good, and this provides a vital link. Fast foot ferries are great. The people who fight against these are those who have been here for a long time and don’t what the growth that can come with these services.

2) More people would rather drive than pay the ferry toll, except now with the upcoming Narrows toll people may go back to the ferry. For many people transportation is tough already, not many venture out to Tacoma or Seattle as it is.

Mr. Brown asked if this was the same sense from the rest of the group?

1) It’s a none-issue for me, because I always miss the boat. I don’t depend on the system. It would be great to have a good system. You should be able to make the boat when you’re on time instead of having to wait two or more crossings before there is space.

Mr. Brown asked the group to clarify the fear of growth within the community.

1) Many people don’t want outsiders to move here, especially those who have been here for a long time.

2) The military is a big presence.

Mr. Brown asked whether this fear of growth had to do with keeping the pristine environment and containing growth?

1) Yes, we want to see trees. But, it’s really more of a personal residential choice. As far as housing areas, some of us like controlled housing areas. Some of us don’t care because that may be where you have a job.

2) There is still fear about growth from the area, especially uncontrolled growth. There is nothing good to look at from King County. Most people just see that growth brings along crime and other problems.
3) Maybe the younger people might not care as much about the quiet places as those who are older. Those who are older may want a little quiet place, while those who are younger may want a different place.

4) There may be a way to create places that meet those different needs.

5) There needs to be site development for community centers, especially for our youth and elderly. It can’t just be mixed through our community. How many youth and recreation centers are there?

6) There is the YMCA, but it has a cost that is tough for single parent families and even those where both parents work.

Mr. Brown asked next if there are aspects, such as design, that need to be remembered in regards to more dense communities and how those aspects impact ethnic communities?

1) Right now there is a lack of things for the younger population to do, and it’s not that dense. There isn’t a plan in place now.

2) The growth here as far as housing has been toward housing development and not recreational centers. There will be an issue about dense communities and we aren’t there yet as far as that vision, that’s too far down that road. Right now we are the fifth largest county in the state.

Mr. Brown commented that the group had mentioned recreational centers and importance of these facilities. He asked whether there were other things that were also important as the community plans for growth?

1) In some ways this has been a retirement community and it’s also a good place to raise kids with low crime. People are just used to that tradition but now that you have the younger population it hasn’t been thought about and you have a lot of retired people. Those that are left are working with no recreation, no entertainment, and no good jobs.

Mr. Brown thought the group should talk next about economics and jobs. He asked what the major needs were, training, access?
1) More diversity in the workforce, which has been an issue for at least 15 years. How many people of color have been hired in the county? How many people of color are there in areas such as teaching, construction and contracting? Our communities want to have a piece of the pie too. How many people have access to information so they can find jobs? Employment information is hard to get other than from the *Sun* newspaper. Our people need jobs and a lot of people of color are looking for jobs.

**Mr. Brown asked whether business development in the area was successful?**

1) People often leave once they get out of high school and don’t come back. Nepotism is alive in Kitsap County. Those who are involved in the hiring opportunities look out for their own. Opportunities are many times created for these people, and as a consequence, those without the network are left aside. With growth comes opportunities for different jobs but people need to know how to have that access through training. Olympic College is a great local resource. Working with the local community college would be a good strategy. How can we make sure that the community can also take advantage of the growth? People who can qualify to complete need to compete on a same playing field. Those who administer the dollars can impact how the county and the city can allocate that money.

2) Job placement needs to be provided to the many organizations helping the ethnic communities. This information is often not received, and at least not received consistently.

3) It’s not in their priority to spread the word about jobs. Recently the Community Leadership and Coalition Alliance (CLAC) gave the Bremerton mayor a D for lack of diversity. We expect them to hire from within the community.

Mr. Brown commented that it seemed people got jobs through their own network, which means many people are out of luck. He continued that people within the minority community need access to this information.

1) People of color need to lobby to the county and the city and others. People frequently don’t question these institutions but they should. Right now there are no role models in place in Kitsap County.

2) Diversity in the workplace isn’t respected enough. We’re not taking seriously enough.

Mr. Brown wondered that as growth happens and more jobs come in it could be all too easy for the minority communities to get left behind. Right now it’s not just awareness, but also the knowledge that jobs are coming and which training is needed.
1) It is a network that people get left out of. It’s a common question to ask when was that job open? Or for people to say that they had never heard about a job. Everybody needs equal opportunity to know about jobs.

2) Don’t put unqualified people in jobs. If they’re qualified they’re qualified, that’s the bottom line. Not everybody can afford to go to college; not everybody can get the paperwork to get the scholarships. You have to understand that kids aren’t getting fed or have other problems. Right now the teachers aren’t getting the support they need.

3) Big employers feel like they’ve let enough people know, that they have enough applicants instead of really paying attention to detail. They never ask if they did enough outreach. Usually people just formulate their own network. Others feel they’ve been left out. You lose confidence that you’ll even get the job even when you do know about it. Many ask if they even have a chance. Equal opportunity employer is just rhetoric, we’re not reaching out to all the qualified people, just doing the minimal effort.

Mr. Brown noted that this has been very helpful so far. He asked if the group could give any guidance about how to reach out to the broader communities that they work with?

1) Visit the Westpark residential council. For African American communities, go through the local churches

Mr. Brown wondered if there were meetings or perhaps gatekeepers to the minority communities?

1) Go through the churches. Civic leaders may not know how to get the information out. Get to know the community leaders and then be able to provide the information

2) Communication is the biggest importance. You’ll have to communicate to all parts of the county and let them know how this will impact them. I used to be a YMCA board member and I think they are a resource that you’ll need to consider. When I worked patrol in a low-income area, the kids would have nothing to do. They have an auxiliary location now in the area, and also a community center in the Silverdale area. The YMCA is always trying to start centers, but it’s always a money issue. Transportation is important to get kids to these resources.

3) A good outreach plan is necessary. Also, create a database of all the community organizations to help with dissemination of information. Language is
a barrier, but translators are available. Many of the service providers can provide them. Some will work with key contact people. Also, the Kurdish community is just sitting there. Try working with the Bremerton Health District, they have contact people that work with the Kurdish population. Create a database of all ethnic communities.

4) Work with the Faith Temple and Mt. Zion churches. There are a total of four African American churches in the area. Also work with the NAACP, CLCA and the YMCA.

5) In the Asian community there are about 10 civic organizations. Also, make sure to outreach to the Japanese population on Bainbridge Island.

Mr. Brown asked if the group could help identify what the messaging should be. We can know where the people are, but without knowing what to say will not involve them.

1) A series of talks with these communities would be helpful

2) People might be tired of meetings, so go to them where they are.

3) Churches are a great way to get information out. Also the NAACP will have a website soon. We can get some information out now, but we need to do that more. We need to exchange information between groups, especially about how to quality for jobs.

4) To reach the Asian-Pacific communities, attend their organization meetings and make it a community forum. The issues here do impact all of our communities. We are underrepresented. Right now we are not a part of the process. The civic leadership does not know how to reach us. They have expectations that we are disseminating information, but we don’t always get the information.

5) In closing, it’s important that you have clarity in your mission statement. If the communities understand what you can do for them, you’ll have better understanding from the community on what they can do for you.

6) If you don’t fund these programs that will wake them up too.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Bakkenta thanked attendees for their participation.

The workshop ended at approximately 6:00 pm.
Social Service Representatives
Jim Seeks - Hopelink
Andra Kranzler - Low Income Housing Institute
Janette Lewis – Councilman McIver’s Office
Al Levine – Seattle Housing Authority

Workshop Staff
Ben Bakkenta – PSRC
Michele Leslie - PSRC
Rita Brogan – PRR
Todd Merkens – PRR

Summary
Ben Bakkenta, of PSRC staff, began the workshop at 4:40 pm.

Rita Brogan thanked everybody and also gave an introduction about the purpose of the workshop.

Mr. Bakkenta introduced PSRC and stated that this workshop is focused on VISION 2020, the region’s multi-county planning policies that help to guide cities, counties and the region to meet the growth management act. As part of the update of VISION 2020, PSRC was challenged to look at issues beyond what they have traditionally explored. This workshop will help to guide outreach and messages for the project, as well as inform other work that PSRC undertakes. Parallel to VISION 2020 is also a process to update Destination 2030, which is the more detailed transportation action plan that implements regional transportation policy, and guides how we spend federal transportation dollars.

One of the questions to answer is whether the PSRC is serving the right people with the right investments.

Ms. Brogan commented that outreach was beginning to identify what the process and plan should be, what the messaging should be, and how to communicate these big polices to everyday people.

The attendees gave brief introductions.

Andra Kranzler - Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI). Her organization has 44 housing units that the developed and now maintain. LIHI also runs the Boomtown café, which provides job training.
Janette Lewis – Councilman McIver’s office. Councilman McIver is the current head of the PSRC board.

Al Levine – Seattle Housing Authority. His work focuses on asset management.

Jim Seeks - Hopelink. Hopelink provides human services to the eastside of the Seattle metro area including food banks, low income housing, emergency housing, and also they broker special needs transportation for King County.

Ms. Brogan began by asking what awareness attendees had of the Vision 2020 update.

Ms. Lewis replied that his work with King County Department of Transportation had introduced him to Vision 2020. He noted interest in learning more about it from the social justice angle.

Ms. Kranzler said she had read about Vision 2020.

Ms. Brogan asked whether constituents of the attendees would be familiar with Vision 2020.

Ms. Kranzler thought maybe one of her constituents might know about the plan.

Mr. Seeks noted that he had a public transit background. He hadn’t realized what stage the planning was in.

Mr. Levine did not know if any of his constituents knew about Vision 2020.

Ms. Brogan asked the group what they thought were the major areas of interest for the communities they worked with.

Mr. Seeks thought it was access to jobs and other social services including healthcare. Improvements are needed with the roadway infrastructure on the eastside.

Ms. Kranzler agreed that access to healthcare is a big issue. She also thought housing was a major area of concern. There aren’t enough housing for the current needs, especially affordable housing. For those that live in temporary housing situations, they may not have a place to go when their housing ends.

Ms. Lewis also thought housing was an important concern.

Mr. Levine noted the importance of proximity of affordable housing to jobs. People now drive until they qualify and that is forcing many further and further from their jobs. Some teachers in California have to drive two hours.
Ms. Kranzler pointed out that many of her constituents go to work everyday and they still can’t make enough. There is need for a livable wage. For those that have committed crimes, they can’t get housing or health services. There are no resources that would allow them to be members of society. We cannot adequately address the concerns of people who have mental illnesses. These people are now living in horrible conditions. People can’t afford medications because of the changes in Medicare. She noted that one residents needs five medications to be balanced and doesn’t know how she will be able to afford these medications in the next year.

Mr. Seeks thought the issue of land use and affordable housing will be a greater and greater issue in the future. Some people live by choice far away from their jobs, but there also needs to be choices for those who do not want to live so far away.

Mr. Levine commented that conditions are getting worse because of the growth in the service industry. Land use needs to be more creative. We need more integration so people are not traveling so far.

Ms. Brogan verified that there was support by the meeting participants for contained urban growth. She asked what tools would be important to continue this policy.

Mr. Levine replied that the region has constrained the land supply, and now housing needs to be considered as prices keep increasing.

Mr. Seeks liked the Seattle urban village concept but said the housing costs are too high in Seattle.

Ms. Lewis suggested the new development in South Lake Union could be a good opportunity to provide housing.

Ms. Kranzler commented that smart growth is a part of the South Lake Union development but that the “mixed use” really means housing for upper income people. People need to get to work, they want to work, and they need and want a place to live.

Ms. Lewis noted that in New York City it is very expensive to live unless you can find a rent controlled apartment.

Mr. Levine stated that the Seattle area is moving that way. In our discussions about prosperity, there is not enough weight given to the housing issue. There is demand for housing created by the quality of the life here in the Seattle area. At this time the Federal government is getting out of the housing business, and there needs to be a plan on how to move forward and continue to provide housing services.
Ms. Brogan asked if the group was saying that smart growth is a good idea, but in and of itself is not enough.

Mr. Levine commented that there is not enough connection between carrot and stick approaches for the City of Seattle’s neighborhood plans. Nobody wants sprawl, but there hasn’t been enough on the incentive side. Maybe PSRC is in a good position to focus on these issues and take a leadership role. There could be a combination between access to jobs, affordable housing and transportation.

**Ms. Brogan asked what the key transportation needs would be.**

Mr. Seeks said that access to transportation during non-traditional jobs hours (off-peak access) was very important. There is the night owl system in Seattle but other communities don’t have that access. Taking a bus to Redmond from Seattle at 11 pm is difficult. For the people that go in at 6:00 pm and get off at 2:00 am, transportation access is a big issue.

Mr. Levine asked if Sound Transit addressed off-peak access.

Mr. Seeks replied that those who don’t live near a route are out of luck. Frequency of service and coverage area needs to expand. Many buses don’t seem direct either, which is frustrating when you’re trying to travel somewhere.

**Ms. Brogan asked if Mr. Seek felt that transit isn’t always practical depending on ones’ travel needs.**

Mr. Seeks pointed out that if you have one appointment in the morning, it could be difficult to do this by bus even in Seattle.

Ms. Kranzler stated that FlexCar is a great option. FlexCar is now targeting low-income individuals. Low-income residents can now get to their job if they need to, and it can be free. Giving transportation to those who don’t have a car is a great benefit

Mr. Seeks asked whether driver needed a credit card to participate with the FlexCar program.

Ms. Kranzler replied that a debit card is acceptable and that there are options for those who don’t have good credit to get a debit card. She also pointed out that for those who have never used a bank account before that is another major issue because it can be so easy to get caught under. If you don’t have money to manage in the first place it’s really hard.

Ms. Lewis noted that money is tight for these families and that she had learned about money because her mom owned a business.
Ms. Kranzler commented that for her constituents $0.50 cents can mean a lot if it gets stuck in the vending machine. These families are at the food banks at the ends of the months because they can’t always make it through. If you can’t afford basic needs after 40 hours a week, then there is a problem.

Ms. Brogan asked Mr. Levine what transportation issues people might have at the Seattle Housing Authority projects.

Mr. Levine replied that job access is obtained mostly with public transit. Public transit is important for his constituents in order to reach services, especially healthcare.

Ms. Brogan wanted to know if transit incentives have any relevance for low income people.

Mr. Seeks stated that it depends on proximity to a bus route. These programs work great if people live where transit is available. The coastguard redevelopment in Redmond is a good example. It is a great community on paper, but how can people get from there to somewhere else unless they have a car because there isn’t good bus service?

Ms. Kranzler stated that it also depends on where people want to live. She gave the example that Cingular had just hired people for a decent salary, but the transportation between the office and where they can afford to live is very difficult.

Mr. Levine replied that Ms. Kranzler was making a great point. Businesses want to get the workers, but the workers need to have transportation services.

Mr. Seeks noted that in some place transit doesn’t make sense. He noted that he had recently taken a look a transit options in south Shoreline from one side of I-5 to another and found that the options were not easy even going such a short distance. Going a long distance can be really difficult.

Mr. Levine thought that maybe big employers could help.

Ms. Brogan noted that the Vision 2020 process includes many policies around economic development. She asked the group about access to education and job training.

Ms. Kranzler commented that a lot of people use the Worksource program. LIHI has workshops and other trainings, but attendance at these events has been low. All day these people deal with their case managers. Sometimes, just to live with in LIHI facilities, residents need to complete up to 50 pages of forms. These residents have already given everything by the end of the day; they don’t have
energy to attend another event. There are required classes that are required that aren’t meeting the needs of residents. She also noted that there is a sizable illiteracy rate among her clients. Other concerns include education. Kids drop out of classes because all their teachers make them do is memorize information. The whole education system isn’t meeting the needs of the community they are targeting. She noted that her residents become frustrated and build up a wall that it is simply best for them to be complacent, so they become complacent.

Ms. Lewis followed by saying she agreed.

Ms. Kranzler felt like the current programs just aren’t effective. These people become products of the system.

Mr. Levine thought that much of what Ms. Kranzler said is true. He noted, however, that the Seattle Housing Authority has requirements about resident job training and even school attendance for children, and from their statistics, this approach is working. He pointed out that, at this point, welfare has been taken away as a long term option for people. The current attack on housing in Washington DC states that subsidized housing is an extension of the welfare system. He stated that stopping housing programs does not make sense for places that are as expensive to live as Seattle.

Ms. Kranzler noted that she had been speaking in general. People are receptive, she felt, but the training opportunities needed to be more effective.

Mr. Levine commented that the Seattle Housing Authority has a lot of services and is trying to deal holistically with the concerns of residents. He added that many clients are illiterate in their own language.

Ms. Brogan commented that often among immigrant communities there is a network of people who help each other out.

Mr. Levine agreed that a lot of low-income families are first generation, and for them, the network is very important. He added that ethnic specific services that really understand and work with these groups are very important. He said the job placement programs in his organization had been effective because the programs worked with families and were site-based. It brings the training and the opportunities to the people who need it.

Ms. Kranzler said that the Seattle Conservation Corps went a long way to get their clients into housing and get them on their feet.

Ms. Brogan asked what approaches are working the rural and suburban areas.
Mr. Seeks commented that his agency tries to take a holistic approach. His organization tries to incorporate language training into the other training opportunities. He noted that everybody’s needs are a little different. It is also a challenge to get out to people in more rural areas. Many may think that it’s only the wealthy who live in Carnation, but there are still many residents there who need help.

Ms. Brogan wanted to know if the rural community has different needs from more urban areas.

Mr. Seeks stated that, from the types of programs that are offered, he didn’t think there is a major difference in needs. One little wrinkle is the people in the emigrant community, in rural areas there isn’t a core population and it’s difficult for people to make those links because the population is spread out.

Ms. Brogan asked if businesses should be working more in partnership with community group to make the benefits of economic development more accessible to low income and minority people.

Mr. Levine said that transportation, job training, and housing would remain important issues. He also suggested that businesses could participate in creating housing. If they want workers, they need to make that happen. He also noted that the University of Washington has that problem, with not enough affordable housing.

Ms. Brogan summarized that the feeling of the group is that the people who sustain our communities can’t afford to live here and that the groups feels that more flexibility to create affordable housing within the population centers would be beneficial. She asked next what sort of tools could create that flexibility.

Mr. Levine replied that density bonuses could be one tool. Transferring development rights might help, also adding open space requirements. Inclusionary zoning has worked in other places. Some areas require developers to make a certain percentage of housing units affordable, or to pay into a fund that then buys more affordable housing. The New Holly development has shown that all kinds of people are willing to live in a neighborhood with lots of mixed housing, whether they recognize it or not. Tools need to be created to get the private developers to do something. Neighborhoods often resist density because they don’t see where the benefits are. For employers, why not make housing part of their big office developments? The entire Valley in South King County has lots of entry-level jobs, but no accessible housing. Mr. Levine clarified that he is not against zoning, but that the community needs to be more flexible and creative.

Mr. Seeks agreed that it was important to have a mix of incomes in housing areas.
Mr. Levine added that this arrangement doesn’t bother young people,

Mr. Seeks thought that if you do a project that’s mixed, that’s quite frankly deals with the biases people may have. There is a need to blend the community.

Mr. Seeks was concerned that everybody is too worried about their property values

Ms. Brogan noted that often people fear the unknown. She added that in focus groups that were conducted for the Growth Management Policy Council, most people didn’t mind density as long as it was well designed.

Mr. Levine commented that Seattle has a particular housing problem with the amount of single-family units. There needs to be good examples of design and good management of that design. He added that parking was an issue and that it does not make sense that parking is required, when the money could be spent on affordable housing. Reducing parking availability might also increase demand for transit.

Ms. Brogan noted that there was consensus among this group about the need for more transit service. There still is the issue on how to pay for it all. Our region has had difficult coming to terms with how to pay for more infrastructure. She asked how tolls might impact low income and ethnic communities.

Ms. Kranzler commented that she thinks tolls are great.

Ms. Lewis said she couldn’t understand why tolls aren’t already used in the Seattle area.

Mr. Seeks said that personally, he feels tolls would be great. But, he added, if you have tolls, you also have to have an alternative for those who cannot afford tolls. If the only way to get to Bellevue is on SR520, tolls will present a problem for low income people.

Ms. Kranzler said that if the goal is to implement a toll system, and you’re also creating a transit system alternative, that would be a good result, especially if you can combine this with building housing near jobs.

Ms. Lewis added that there is a disconnect between what people want and what they are willing to pay for.

Ms. Brogan asked how low income and ethnic communities perceived the importance of environmental protection.
Ms. Kranzler said it is a concern, but not for them an everyday priority, as they have other concerns.

Ms. Brogan asked the group or ideas on the best methods for involving the low income community and communities of color.

Ms. Lewis suggested working through the University of Washington. She remembered working on community outreach as a graduate student.

Ms. Kranzler agreed, recalling that she did a lot of outreach at her school too.

Mr. Seeks added that his organization has 12 sites and those might be good places to reach people. The only concern would be whether they were interested.

Mr. Levine suggested that talking with the Joint Policy Advisory Council might be worthwhile.

Ms. Kranzler said it is important to let communities know what they are agreeing to when they review neighborhood plans.

Mr. Levine noted that everything with government planning seems disconnected and that frustrates people about government.

Ms. Brogan asked whether other connections, such as churches, would be important.

Ms. Lewis said, yes, churches would be helpful.

Ms. Kranzler added that in the South Lake Union area there is a Russian orthodox church and a Lutheran center that might be good contacts.

Mr. Seeks noted that Metro has a program working with non-English speakers who are community contacts for others to help them learn about transit options.

Ms. Brogan asked what can we say to people to get them involved; are there important messages?

Mr. Seeks said it is important for people to see the benefits to them.

Ms. Lewis added the importance to be really clear in communicating about Vision 2020.

The workshop ended at approximately 6:00 pm.