

# VISION 2040 & Urban Land

people



prosperity



planet

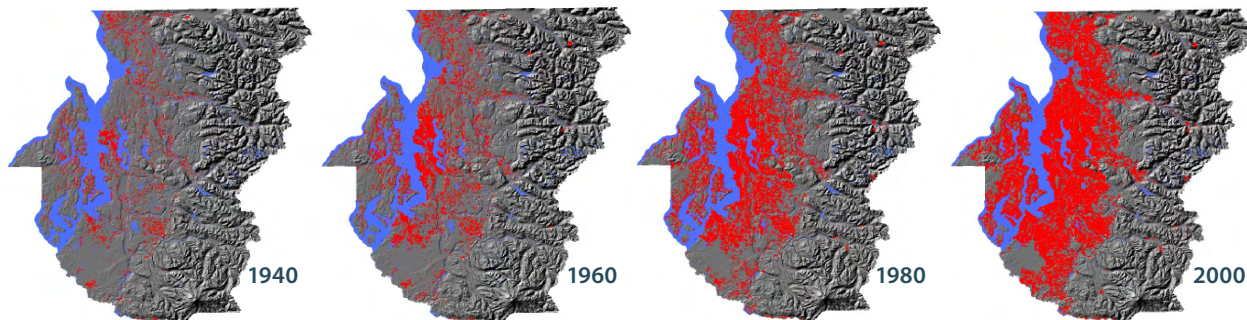


*Urban land refers to both cities and unincorporated areas within the urban growth area. The Washington state Growth Management Act includes goals to reduce sprawl and ensure that urban growth occurs in areas designated for urban uses, where services can be provided more efficiently. Properly managed land development can protect habitat and ecosystems, minimize pollution, and improve mobility.*

## The Importance of Addressing Urban Land

Accommodating population and employment growth in a more sustainable way means directing development to the region's existing urban lands, especially in centers and compact communities. It means limiting growth on rural lands that play a vital role in the region's economy. Compact development creates vibrant, livable, and healthy urban communities that offer economic opportunities for all, provide housing and transportation choices, and use our resources wisely.

### Growth of the Region's Urban Footprint



Source: Urban Ecology Research Lab, University of Washington. Note: Footprint is depicted by parcel boundaries containing development.

## What's in VISION 2040?

VISION 2040 calls for focusing population and employment growth in cities and limiting population and employment growth in rural areas. The *Regional Growth Strategy* allocates 93 percent of the region's future population growth and 97 percent of its employment growth into the existing urban growth area. Cities are divided into four distinct groups: *Metropolitan Cities*, *Core Cities*, *Large Cities*, and *Small Cities*. The groupings are based on (1) whether a city has a regional growth center, or (2) the total population and employment in the city. An additional geography is *Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas*. VISION 2040 recognizes that unincorporated urban lands are often similar in character to cities they are adjacent to. It calls for them to be affiliated with adjacent cities for joint planning purposes and future annexation.

**Multicounty Planning Policies.** VISION 2040 calls for a more efficient, sustainable, and strategic use of land. Emphasis is placed on centers as compact, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented locations with a mix of residences, jobs, retail, and other amenities. Strategic investment in urban facilities ensures that services are provided in efficiently. This includes prioritizing the siting of facilities and major public amenities in centers and compact urban communities.

**Actions.** VISION 2040 directs the Regional Council to develop a framework to review and comment on adjustments to the urban growth area. The Council is also to develop a common regional framework for identifying centers and central places. Existing regionally designated centers are to be monitored and regularly evaluated. Other actions

include work on best practices and approaches for incorporating sustainable development and regional design into various local, regional, and other agency planning processes.

Local jurisdictions should identify strategies to redevelop underutilized lands. Counties should work with adjacent cities to craft municipal standards for development in unincorporated urban areas.

### **What This Means for Other Planning Efforts in the Region**

The region's four counties should develop compatible approaches for adjusting urban growth area designations, based on demonstrated need and an analysis of land capacity. Countywide planning policies should address brownfield and contaminated site clean-up, as well as redevelopable sites. Countywide planning bodies should provide direction in establishing development standards that are consistent between cities and adjacent unincorporated urban areas.



Local comprehensive plans should take steps to ensure that compact communities and centers have densities that support transit and walking. Each city should identify one or more central places for more compact, mixed-use development. Local development regulations should reinforce the effective use of urban land, including tools and practices such as flexible zoning, streamlined development regulations, and density bonuses. Transit agencies and service providers should promote the strategic investment in facilities and services in cities and centers.

### **For More Information**

Additional information on VISION 2040 and how it addresses urban land use is available by contacting the Puget Sound Regional Council's Information Center at 206-464-7532 or [info@psrc.org](mailto:info@psrc.org).