Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

The central Puget Sound region has a long cultural history, beginning with indigenous peoples, who lived here in a rich ecosystem. The tools, structures, record of their existence, and of the settlers who came after them, are the Puget Sound region’s historic and cultural resources. Some summary highlights are noted below regarding the potential for them to be impacted under the growth distribution alternatives.

5.11.1 Affected Environment

The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) uses the phrase “cultural and historic resources” for property types representing human culture and heritage, including sites, buildings, structures, objects, districts, traditional cultural places and cultural/historic landscapes that have been identified and documented as being significant in local or state history, architecture, archaeology, engineering or culture (DAHP, 2004; DAHP, 2005). DAHP broadly defines cultural resources as any resource, regardless of age, that has the potential to be listed on the National Register of Historical Properties (NRHP). DAHP includes modern resources (i.e., less than 50 years old) in their inventory of cultural resources. Resources that post-date Euro-American contact (1790) are referred to as “historic resources.” This terminology differs from the National Park Service. The National Park Service defines “cultural resources” as those actually listed on, or eligible for listing on the National Historical Register (DAHP, 2004).

For this analysis, historic and cultural resources include properties and resources that have been identified or evaluated for inclusion on the Washington Historic Register, the NRHP or local registers or landmark registries. Inclusion on the National Register automatically places a property on the Washington Historic Register. The Washington Historic Register includes properties that do not meet the higher standards of the National Register, as well as properties that are listed on the National Register. Common features of the two registers are that a resource (a building, site, structure or object) must be at least 50 years old. If newer, the resource should have documented exceptional significance. The resource should have a high to medium level of integrity, meaning it should retain important character defining features from its historic period of construction, and the resource should have documented historical significance at the local, state or federal level (DAHP, 2005).

1 Documented significance, or exceptional significance, is normally defined as those properties (of the resource) that “…demonstrate that the nominated property is an especially good or unusual example of its kind, or that it has remained intact while most other related properties have been changed, or that events or individuals connected with the property had a long lasting impact on the town, community or region.” (DAHP, 2005). See Washington State Heritage Register Guidebook, accessed from DAHP web site http://www.oahp.wa.gov/pages/Documents/Sites.htm.
A. REGULATORY SETTING

Federal, state, and local laws and ordinances regulate the identification and treatment of historic properties. There are several laws and regulations that apply to the protection of historic resources, although the applicability of the regulations depends upon the actions involved. For VISION 2040, the action is a planning-level decision, and does not directly involve project-level permits or approvals, and is not site-specific. However, the most applicable regulations for developing actions are:

- State Environmental Protection Act.
- Shoreline Management Act.
- National Environmental Policy Act.
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
- Section 4(f) regulations of the Federal Department of Transportation (FHWA, 2005).²

The Revised Code of Washington 27.34.200 and 25.12 Washington Administrative Code provide the legal framework for the designation, preservation, protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of structures of historic, archaeological, and cultural significance. Chapter 25.12 Washington Administrative Code specifically addresses compliance by the advisory council on historic preservation with the provisions dealing with public records.

The State Environmental Protection Act requires any impacts to historic and cultural resources, known or unknown, be considered during the public environmental review process. The Shoreline Management Act deals with development permits issued by local governments, including areas with archaeological sites.

The National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and its implementing regulations (36 Code of the Federal Register 800) include requirements for projects having federal funding, federal permits, or that involve federal lands, to consider the effect of the project on historic or cultural resources within the region. A Section 106 review involves consultation with the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the State Historic Preservation Officer, Native American tribes, and the public.

County and city governments frequently maintain local historic registers for historic and cultural resources in their municipality and many have ordinances protecting resources. Criteria for inclusion vary, but most require a minimum age (usually greater than 50 years) and/or historic significance relating to the area’s history. These local sites and landmarks may be included in the Washington State Register. As with state historical sites, protection for the sites may be limited. The local historic preservation department normally considers requests for changes to designated historic sites or resources. Several local jurisdictions also have laws or ordinances for the preservation of historic resources.

Section 4(f) is part of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. It states that it is a national policy to preserve, where possible, “the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites.”

The Archaeological Resources Protection act of 1979 applies to archeological sites on both tribal and non-tribal lands, which are managed under the federal government such as the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

B. RESOURCES

Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites in the central Puget Sound region include shell middens, burials, lithic sites, wet sites and rock shelters. These resource types reflect a number of cultural uses including villages, camps, food gathering and other seasonal activity sites used by hunter-fisher-gatherer groups beginning around 11,000 years ago. Most sites are associated with shoreline areas and watercourses. In the central Puget Sound region, many of the major cities and activity areas have been developed along shorelines, which has altered them either through fill or movement. Surface evidence of prehistoric sites is scarce as they get damaged or lost due to development and watercourse modifications.

However, evidence of prehistoric development may be found below ground in areas near historic watercourses and shorelines. Archaeological sites from the historic period may be visible at the surface as they are more recent. Relatively little information is available to the public for archaeological sites due to the sensitive nature of the site and state laws that exempt public disclosure to help prevent looting and vandalism. However, during project-level reviews, site-specific investigations are used to identify the likelihood or probability of encountering archaeological resources, and areas with known resources are identified.

Traditional Cultural Properties

Traditional cultural properties refer to those beliefs, customs, and practices of a living community of people that have been passed down through the generations, usually orally or through practice. The traditional cultural significance of a historic property, then, is significance derived from the role the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices (Parker & King, 1983). Traditional cultural properties in the central Puget Sound region are primarily associated with Native American tribes. Both federally and non-federally recognized tribes are allowed to identify traditional cultural properties. Consultation with the appropriate tribe is done at the project level by the lead agency with the assistance of the DAHP and the Washington State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs to avoid or minimize impacts to traditional cultural properties.

Historic Properties

Euro-American settlement in the central Puget Sound region began in the 1850s. Early settlers farmed, logged, ranched and mined in the area. Railroad construction connected communities in the 1870s and the transcontinental railroad arrived in Seattle in 1893. The Klondike gold discovery in 1896 sparked a population and development boom throughout the Puget Sound region. Evidence of early Euro-American settlements is widespread in the region. Many historic buildings, bridges, and sites are listed on the NRHP, the Washington Historic Register and local historic registers (HistoryLink.org, 2005). The majority of the historic properties currently listed are concentrated in major urban areas of Seattle, Tacoma, Bremerton, and Everett.

Figure 5-11-1 on the next page, shows the historic and cultural resources listed on the Washington Historic Register as of 2005. The concentration of historical and cultural resources in the core urban areas may also be reflected in local community and county registers.

The majority of resources listed on the state and national registers are from pre-World War II eras. Resources and properties dating from the World War II era and the modern era are now becoming eligible for investigation and inclusion in the historic registers (HistoryLink.org, 2005; DAHP, 2005), and are increasingly being noted as properties most in need of protection because their qualities and significance may be overlooked and they are often in areas with high rates of redevelopment activities. There are a large number of properties that may be eligible, or that could become eligible in coming years. Some of these properties have not yet been identified or evaluated for eligibility on the national, state or local historic registers, while others have been determined eligible but have not been formally nominated. The region has seen roughly four boom and bust cycles through the years, including the lumber industry/gold rush booms (circa 1850 – 1900), the shipbuilding boom (circa 1900 – World War I), the Boeing boom (circa World War II – 1970), and the emergence of the high technology sector (circa 1979 – 2000). With each boom cycle the region’s population expanded, and suburbs sprang up surrounding the early urban centers. Many recently identified historic resources may be located and identified in these suburbs.

3 HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Overview of King County History, Historical Paper No. 3 (by King County Landmarks and Heritage Program, King County Office of Cultural Resources, 2002), http://www.historylink.org/ (accessed 10/27/05).
FIGURE 5-11-1: HISTORIC SITES IN THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION

Source: King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, National Register of Historic Places
5.11.2 Analysis of Alternatives (Long-Term Impacts)

Development actions are a reasonably foreseeable result of the projected population and employment growth expected in the region. The analysis of effects considers the potential for construction and changes in setting in areas where historic, cultural, and archaeological resources may exist.

As areas are developed or redeveloped, there is potential for new projects to encounter previously unknown or newly eligible historic and cultural resources, with ages ranging from archaeological to Euro-American settlement to recent (post-World War II) eras. Suburbs dating from the 1930s and 1940s have potential for historic preservation resources as sites in these communities become eligible for listing. Such properties more and more include those associated with America’s roadside culture including motels, drive-in restaurants, gas stations and automobile dealerships from the post-World War II era. Buildings from the World War II through the 1950s era are also less likely to be already recognized as historic resource in local, state or federal listings. However, properties from any era may be viewed as viable for development, and even NRHP-listed properties may be demolished, particularly when ownership and the proposed redevelopment are privately owned (DAHP, 2005).

A. IMPACTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

All of the alternatives predict high levels of population and employment growth in the region. Development has the potential to alter landscapes and properties that may yield archaeological, cultural, or historic artifacts and settings. Impacts to historic, archaeological, and cultural resources could include damage or destruction, loss of association, visual impact, change of setting, and noise, vibration or traffic impacts that make current uses difficult or uneconomic.

At the same time, increased population in proximity to already protected resources may provide increased access and opportunities for residents to experience these resources, strengthening their own connections with the region’s history and culture.

Airborne transportation pollutants, including particulate matter, can impact, degrade and erode historic structures and sites, because the materials of older buildings and resources are often more susceptible to damage from them. The primary difference among the alternatives relates to the distribution of growth in specific areas relative to the distribution of historic and cultural/archaeological resources, as shown earlier in Figure 5-11-1.

B. ANALYSIS OF EACH ALTERNATIVE

Preferred Growth Alternative

By focusing more growth in the more densely urbanized portions of the region than under current plans (Growth Targets Extended), the Preferred Growth Alternative could place the pressure on redevelopment of properties in major metropolitan cities and core cities. In some instances, growth pressures on urban historic buildings could result in removal of significant structures, and alter or destroy historic settings. In other instances, however, it could create a market for renovation and reuse. Growth outside of older neighborhoods and downtowns could be less likely to impact historic resources. The Preferred Growth Alternative could also lessen impacts on rural, unincorporated areas, and small cities' archaeological sites, although typical impacts discussed above could still occur.
King and Pierce counties contain the highest number of identified historic structures as well as the two most highly populated cities within the region, Seattle and Tacoma. The Preferred Growth Alternative distribution to King is in the middle of the range of the alternatives and distributions to Pierce is second most. Since the Preferred Growth Alternative encourages growth within metropolitan cities and core cities, the impacts of this alternative on historic structures could likely be in the mid-range of the impacts expected for other alternatives within King and about the same as under current plans (Growth Targets Extended) in Pierce, Kitsap and Snohomish Counties.

**Growth Targets Extended Alternative**

The majority of listed historic sites are located within urban King County. Growth Targets Extended includes substantial growth in unincorporated rural areas, metropolitan cities, and core cities. The alternative has the second least amount of growth in King County overall. Growth Targets Extended could have substantial impact on archaeological, cultural and historic sites located in rural areas as a result of the pressure to disperse growth to these areas. Growth Targets Extended may also result in the uncovering of new sites. Such sites are required to be recorded and studied, in accordance with applicable law.

**Metropolitan Cities Alternative**

This alternative would place the most pressure on redevelopment of properties in major metropolitan cities, which have the highest stocks of historic, archaeological, and culturally significant properties 50 years or older. The Metropolitan Cities Alternative encourages concentrated growth and would create pressure on urban historic buildings. In some instances, this pressure could result in removal of significant structures, and alter or destroy historic settings. In other instances, however, it could create a market for renovation and reuse. The Metropolitan Cities Alternative would have the least impact on rural, unincorporated areas, and small suburban city archaeological sites, although typical impacts discussed above could still occur.

King and Pierce counties contain the highest number of historic structures as well as the two most highly populated cities within the region, Seattle and Tacoma. The Metropolitan Cities Alternative allocates the most amount of growth in King County. Since the Metropolitan Cities Alternative encourages growth within major metropolitan cities, the impacts of this alternative on historic structures would likely be the greatest in King and Pierce counties. Kitsap and Snohomish counties contain fewer registered historic and cultural sites, and more of the developed areas are more recently built. Therefore, growth outside of older neighborhoods and downtowns would be less likely to impact historic resources.

**Larger Cities Alternative**

With population and employment growth dispersed slightly more under this alternative than in the Metropolitan Cities and Preferred Growth Alternative but less than in the Growth Targets Extended and the Smaller Cities alternatives, the Larger Cities Alternative would have a greater impact on suburban and rural historic, archaeological, and cultural sites than the Metropolitan Cities and to a lesser extent the and Preferred Growth Alternative. Impacts could include removal or alteration of significant structures and sites. Conversely, as with all other alternatives, the opportunity for renovation and reuse exists.

Impacts would be greatest in King and Pierce counties since those counties contain the highest number of significant sites and structures. However, since the Larger Cities Alternative encourages growth outside major metropolitan areas, suburban and rural structures and archaeological sites are more likely to be impacted, especially in Snohomish and Kitsap counties.
Smaller Cities Alternative

The impacts expected under this alternative are similar to those expected under Growth Targets Extended. As with Growth Targets Extended, the majority of impacts would occur in rural archaeological, cultural, and historic sites. The possibility of encountering new sites, especially archaeological and cultural, is greater under the Smaller Cities Alternative than under the Metropolitan Cities, Preferred Growth, and Larger Cities alternatives.

Urban historic sites, mainly located in King and Pierce counties, would experience a lesser degree of impact under this alternative when compared to the Metropolitan Cities, Preferred Growth, and Larger Cities alternatives.

5.11.3 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts include both past and reasonably foreseeable future impacts to historic and cultural resources. Most of the future impacts are already within the range of impacts discussed as part of the long-term impacts of the alternatives, which assume that future population and employment growth would result in increased development and redevelopment throughout the region. There would be relatively few other factors or forces that would impose change on the resources within this region. However, from the perspective of past impacts plus the potential for future impacts (with continued population and employment growth likely to continue past the planning horizon of this VISION update), there would be a high potential for continued loss of many of the properties and artifacts that provide examples of an important information about the region and its peoples’ past. At the same time, development and growth can provide opportunities for redevelopment and reuse of historic or culturally significant structures.

5.11.4 Potential Mitigation Measures

While federal and state governments provide guidelines and incentives for historic preservation, in general, the local governments make the final decisions. Based on their own regulatory requirements and applicable laws, local governments could evaluate the following strategies for preserving archaeological and historic sites:

- Use local planning and zoning techniques to identify and protect historic properties, including:
  - Additional property surveys and inventories. This additional information could be used to identify resources and conservation areas.
  - Encourage increased protection through historic preservation ordinances and historic resource review processes, in coordination with DAHP. For example, transfer of development rights programs for historic districts.
  - While maintaining the original character, allow for the adaptive reuse of properties.
- Provide tax incentives to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties. Make maximum use of the 20 percent federal tax credit on the cost of certified rehabilitation of income-producing property that is on the National Register.
- Use fee simple acquisition or the purchase of protective easements to control historic properties.
- Purchase of easements, which is a portion of the property rights, can provide historic preservation at less cost.
5.11.5 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Pieces of the past are often lost as a result of growth. The destruction of historic, cultural, and archeological sites is likely under all alternatives, particularly when ownership of properties and proposed development actions are in the private sector. Historic structures of all significance levels may be demolished to pave the way for new growth. Even if a structure is designated as historic by the state, if the structure is privately owned, the landowner may choose to demolish the structure. Even if structures are not demolished, the general context and scene surrounding historic structures is likely to change as development occurs around them.

Archaeological sites are likely to be discovered under all alternatives. In some cases, sites are not recognized as significant and remain undocumented. If structures are built on land containing unrecognized artifacts, these artifacts are essentially locked up and will remain undocumented. If the land is privately-owned, development is not prohibited even though archaeologically and culturally important resources could be lost. If the land is federally- or state-owned, development must cease until the site is recorded, studied, and the artifacts catalogued. If the site is of particular importance, especially sites significant to native peoples, the site could be designated as significant and further development would not occur. Development may still occur on these federally-owned lands and there are many high profile examples of this, both regional and national.