A Regional Design Strategy
In Support of VISION 2040 for the Central Puget Sound Region

June 2007

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

The central Puget Sound region is graced with a spectacular natural setting, and many of its cities and towns are known for their beauty, livability, and dynamic economies. All of this makes Puget Sound one of the most desirable metropolitan regions in the country. However, much of the urbanized area is characterized by auto-oriented development typical of the mid to late 20th Century. Increased listings of endangered species indicate that human activities threaten the regional ecosystem, and current development patterns are overtaxing the region’s transportation and infrastructure systems. With projected growth, the region will accommodate a forecasted 1.6 million new residents and 1.1 million new jobs within the next 35 years.

This dramatic region-wide forecast presents both challenges and opportunities for harnessing the energy of incoming residents. To this end, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is updating VISION 2020 (adopted in 1995), the region’s long-range strategy for growth, transportation, and the economy. The product of this update, VISION 2040, aims for an environmentally friendly and economically successful growth pattern that can be efficiently served by infrastructure, services, and amenities. The updated vision will provide a common framework for the region’s leadership to coordinate efforts that support the needs of a growing population by promoting a preferred growth pattern.

The Regional Design Strategy supports the goals of VISION 2040 by providing design concepts, strategies, and tools to implement VISION 2040’s policies at the local level. Successful growth management requires the application of design, which is distinct from planning in the role that it plays in shaping the physical environment: creating livable communities, integrating land use and transportation systems, restoring habitats, and providing an intentional connection between human built structures and the natural environment. This strategy addresses the design issues that a regional long range plan, such as VISION 2040, will face in accommodating dynamic change in the central Puget Sound region. And, as PSRC Growth Management Policy Board Member and Seattle City Council Member Peter Steinbreuk has pointed out, “you can’t have quantity without quality.” This is a strategy to help local governments maintain and strengthen that quality on a regional scale.
Purpose and Intent of a Regional Design Strategy

Scope of Work

In July 2006, the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) awarded a grant to the Puget Sound Regional Design Team for 2006 through 2007. Money was granted, through PSRC as the fiscal agent, for two purposes. The first, create a Regional Design Strategy that would link urban design to regional long range planning in a way that would be useful to other regions and communities throughout Washington State. The second charge was to help PSRC by providing them with design assistance during the development of VISION 2040.

Process

This Regional Design Strategy is the result of a highly collaborative process. Initial grass roots efforts from a dedicated group of volunteer urban design professionals and academicians from the University of Washington resulted in the formation of The Puget Sound Regional Design Team and a committed partnership with the Puget Sound Regional Council. The Design Team actively sought assistance from the urban design community throughout the region through a series of workshops and outreach events. The Design Team Steering Committee worked collaboratively to craft the Regional Design Strategy. (For a more detailed description of this process, please refer to Appendix A.)

The Intent of a Regional Design Strategy: What is Regional Design?

The notion of regional design is a new one, so a further description of its make-up and intent is warranted. In detailing the characteristics of regional design, it is especially useful to describe what it is not.

Regional design, as practiced in this project, is not a master plan with a preconceived set of built elements. Nor is it aimed at a steady-state, unchanging vision of a regional Tomorrowland. Just as values, physical context, economic forces, and other conditions change, so must the physical setting change and, with it, design objectives, models, and strategies. Design provides a framework within which markets act and react. Therefore, the ultimate goal of regional design is to allow Puget Sound communities to evolve in a variety of ways that meet local objectives through preferred development practices, providing enough direction for better coordination of activities, greater compatibility between jurisdictions, increased efficiency of regional infrastructure systems, and more effective achievement of overarching regional goals. In conceptual terms, the desired outcome of design efforts is a dynamic, changing physical environment which responds to changing values and conditions.
In this regard, regional design is not a top-down effort, with some regional entity setting standards for local governments. The Regional Design Strategy does recommend a set of multicounty planning policies to be included in VISION 2040; however, private investment and civic projects (guided by local governments), agency and institutional activities, and public efforts will still be the primary shapers of the region’s environment. A regional design strategy will provide a conceptual framework and a means of better coordinating these activities. Regional design is primarily about coordination and cooperation. It is about better integrating physical elements into a functional and attractive pattern, but, even more, it is about bringing ideas, disciplines, governments, organizations, and interests together to address the broader challenges facing the region.

Design, especially regional design, is not simply about aesthetics. Functional, ecological, economic, and social objectives are equally of concern, if not more, than mere physical beauty. However, it is the premise of this work, so far upheld by recent experience, that achieving economic, ecological, and community-based objectives involves enhancing the physical and visual environment, and that all of these objectives are intimately related.

The Value and Importance of Regional Design

The Value of Design

Urban design, distinct from planning, focuses on physical form, sensory characteristics, and guides implementation at a full range of scales. Because of this emphasis, design can be invaluable for at least five reasons:

1. Design can be used as a problem solving tool to integrate diverse objectives and elements. For example, design solutions have proven effective in integrating land use and transportation (station area planning involves design measures), fitting transportation improvements to the local community (context sensitive design), increasing the compatibility between uses (mixed-use centers), and incorporating environmental restoration in development.

2. Design can be used to translate regional scale policies and strategies to a local level. For example, the VISION 2020 strategies from 1995, when calling to develop a range of urban centers, relied heavily on design measures at the local level to create desirable places to attract growth.

3. Design is the discipline that most directly addresses livability objectives. Designers have long emphasized creating walkable neighborhoods, providing urban amenities, protecting cherished resources and views, enhancing visual qualities, and revitalizing business districts to provide local commercial and community services.
4. Design can be used to paint a picture of what larger policy directives and quantitative planning parameters will look and feel like (for example, the number of dwelling units per acre) by translating for the public what those numbers will mean in their communities. During the past decades, designers have used graphics to illustrate proposed conditions or design guidelines that will reduce negative impacts; these techniques have helped communities make increasingly proactive and participatory decisions about accommodating growth. Similarly, protecting and enhancing ecological systems at the regional scale will require design solutions that can both accommodate growth and enhance individual environmental assets.

5. Design tools facilitate effective public participation in planning issues. Because design illustrations help people to understand the issues, design provides solutions to resolve apparent conflicts. Designers have developed a number of participation techniques, such as visual preference surveys and alternative evaluation exercises. As a result, design has proven invaluable in meaningful public participation.

Why Design is Important at the Regional Level

While local governments have used design measures in comprehensive and sub-area planning to build urban districts and central places, design large public facilities, maintain rural corridors, and accomplish a variety of other objectives, there are numerous challenges and opportunities for design at the regional scale and at least three reasons for undertaking a regional design strategy. First, many of the region’s most cherished elements, ecological systems and characteristics—such as rural valleys, shorelines, foothills, and river corridors—extend well outside municipal boundaries. Similarly, many of the region’s human-made systems, such as arterials and highways, transit corridors, clusters of emerging centers, and industrial areas, traverse multiple jurisdictions, as illustrated by Figure 1. Indeed, they are the connective tissue that ties the region together.

Figure 1: Many design issues and regional systems transcend jurisdictional boundaries
Second, many planning challenges are shared by communities throughout the region. For example, several cities are undertaking innovative steps to radically improve their urban centers to provide affordable housing, better link transportation and land use, and upgrade their civic identities. Sharing the experiences and information at the regional level can facilitate these local efforts and create a body of successful practices for others to use.

Third, there is the question of regional character. All communities would benefit from a more clearly defined sense of regional character. A strong identity or “sense of place” increases a sense of belonging to and caring for a community and is an asset for increasing economic activity, livability, and collective action. More clearly defined regional character will give local communities clearer perspective on how they fit within the regional setting and will help them to define their own unique identities. Finally, exploring the region’s physical, social, and cultural identities will begin to identify the common values and objectives that are common throughout Puget Sound, providing a stronger basis for a broad range of management and enhancement activities.

**Potential Leadership Role for Regional Planning**

The regional design proposals in this document primarily address regionally scaled issues. The recommendations (in Chapter Five) focus on activities wherein PSRC can play a leadership role or at least participate meaningfully. These encompass three roles for PSRC:

1. **Extending PSRC’s tradition of regional research to design issues.** PSRC should be recognized as an entity for generating design research and for disseminating design assistance to local jurisdictions. PSRC is ideally positioned to play a much larger role in strengthening a sense of regional identity among citizens by building awareness of the region’s unique characteristics. Part of this support will include monitoring achievements and providing local governments with examples of successful processes.

2. **Coordinating group activities and providing information and guidance.** Some of the recommendations begin with a step that explores identified issues and then addresses the concerns by supporting collective action from local governments. This coordination will also serve to foster continued dialogue among urban design professionals across the region.

3. **Funding transportation and economic development projects that advance regional design objectives.** Parts of the Regional Design Strategy could provide design and development criteria for evaluating proposed transportation or economic development projects that uphold design and livability objectives.
Together this Regional Design Strategy points to a more active commitment on the part of PSRC to address the physical quality of the region’s environment. This is a dramatic step that would take full advantage of an invaluable growth management tool which is critical for addressing the many challenges and opportunities that currently face the central Puget Sound region.

**Document Organization**

Figure 2 shows how the chapters in the Regional Design Strategy, in blue, relate to each other. It also shows how the Design Strategy provided design assistance to PSRC’s VISION 2040, in red. Each box represents a chapter as follows:

- **Four Guiding Principles** (Chapter Two) – These basic principles are modes of thought, or ways of thinking about regional planning and design issues. They are themes that surfaced repeatedly during Design workshops with members of the region’s professional urban design community. They provide both the basis for the policies the Design Team recommended to PSRC’s VISION 2040 and the conceptual underpinnings for the rest of the document.

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**Figure 2:** This organizational chart shows relationships among chapters in the Regional Design Strategy (in blue), and how those elements have impacted PSRC’s VISION 2040 (in red).
• **A Guided Discussion about the Character of a Region** (Chapter Three) – This chapter provides a compelling narrative that begins to identify regionally critical characteristics, identifies the values embedded in VISION 2040 policy language, and ties regional character to issues of policy implementation on the local level. This guided discussion has the potential to assist local planning practitioners by providing them with means for supporting on-the-ground implementation of regional policies.

• **Strategies to Shape the Region’s Physical Structure** (Chapter Four) – This chapter identifies six integrated sets of recommended actions to address geographically specific challenges and opportunities within the central Puget Sound region. Each strategy focuses on a geographic setting or land use element, such as urban centers, linear systems, industrial estuaries and floodplains, suburban-to-rural transitions, or automobile-oriented suburban areas. These strategies have been chosen because they reinforce the values and important regional characteristics in the Chapter Three discussion on regional character.

• **Compendium Examples** (Appendix D) – This appendix is an initial collection of models, concepts, and examples of best practices that illustrate ways in which pieces of the strategies are being implemented in the region. As this piece continues to be expanded through collaborative process, it will become an additional practical resource for planning and design practitioners.

• **Implementation Recommendations** (Chapter Five) – This chapter provides a listing of the Regional Design Team’s top priority recommendations, with suggestions regarding how actions may be pursued.

As Figure 2 shows, all of these chapters form the basis for the design assistance that the Regional Design Strategy has provided to VISION 2040. The Design Team recommended design-related multicounty planning policies to PSRC’s Regional Staff Committee and Growth Management Policy Board. A number of these design policies were incorporated into VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies, and the design team in turn used all of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies to support the recommended strategies (Chapter Four) and the discussion on regional character (Chapter Three).

The strategy outlined in this document involves new ideas, changes in current development trends, ambitious collective action, and sustained effort over time. But the rewards for undertaking such a program will be great, for it will pass on to future generations the wonderful legacy we have enjoyed.
Definitions

Terms used in this document are defined as follows:

- **Region**: King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, along with their cities and towns.

- **Eco-region**: All lands within central Puget Sound’s watershed, extending beyond the four counties.

- **Design**: As used here, design, commonly called urban design or community design, refers to the manipulation of the built environment through a public process that responds to all stakeholder interests, considers a range of scales (human, building, neighborhood, city, region), and addresses the sensory environment (i.e., what the results of an action will look and feel like). Thus, design is distinct from planning in the conscientious role it plays in shaping physical environment. Because of its emphasis on linking physical design to social, economic, and ecological objectives, urban design has proven invaluable in coordinating diverse disciplines (such as science, engineering, and planning), facilitating public participation, and mobilizing civic action.

- **Regional Design**: The extension of urban design practices to the regional level in order to support regional planning objectives.

- **Regional Systems and Landscapes**: Elements or processes that function at a regional scale and extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries. A systems approach creates an integrated whole from more than one component and multiple objectives.

- **Corridors**: Linear elements or features including natural elements, such as river corridors and ridge lines, and human made features, such as transportation routes and linear development patterns.

**In summary**

This Regional Design Strategy provides:

- A conceptual framework of principles, policies and strategies that will support city and county efforts to meet both local and regional objectives,

- A mode of communication and coordination to integrate individual local and organizational efforts to achieve greater success.

- A method for discussing regional image and character and taking collective steps to enhance the region’s sense of place.

- A portfolio of examples, models, best practices and information resources to assist local governments, and communities in their efforts.
Chapter Two: Four Guiding Principles

The following fundamental principles were developed during the three Puget Sound Regional Design Team work sessions in the summer of 2006 (see Appendix A). These workshops involved gathering together urban design professionals and recording their collective design experience in the central Puget Sound region. Each workshop revealed thematic ways of thinking about regional scale issues, and these themes have been distilled into four principles to guide the approach to design at a regional scale. Thus, these principles provide goal statements and guiding concepts that give rise to the strategies and actions recommended in this Regional Design Strategy.

Four Guiding Principles

Principle 1

The natural environment - and the ecological processes that support it - is a primary basis for regional form and is fundamental to regional character.

This principle acknowledges that protecting and enhancing the region’s ecological system is a primary challenge. Because these systems are regional in scale (e.g., watershed systems), design efforts must be applied at the regional as well as the local level, such as the examples illustrated in Figure 3. Objectives falling within this principle include:

Balance Ecology with Human Settlement
The central Puget Sound region will be characterized by the physical beauty of natural features integrated with the built environment.

Regional Open-space
The region will feature an integrated park-open-space-trail system that links urban, rural, and resource lands, provides amenities to all citizens, sustains environmental systems and contributes to the region’s visual character.

Sustainability meets needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. United Nations Bundtland Report, 1987.
Resiliency
The region’s ability to cope with adverse trends, economic cycles, and disasters will be enhanced by creating more sustainable communities able to adapt to change and by reducing dependency on non-renewable resources. The region will anticipate climatic and economic changes related to global warming and use technological innovation and or low-impact development strategies to address those challenges.

Figure 3: Environmental restoration is becoming an increasingly important part of shaping the urban environment. The challenge for planning is to make local improvements that accomplish the most in restoring landscape scale ecosystems. The challenge for design will be to better integrate environment restoration with recreation improvements and private development opportunities.
Principle 2

Apply a systems approach.

A systems approach considers planning issues in a multidimensional, multidisciplinary manner and seeks to understand the intertwined relationships between elements and systems to better address issues in a holistic manner.

Urban design generally applies the systems approach to address land use, transportation, environmental, morphological, and social concerns holistically. However, design (and systems thinking) at the regional scale involves larger, more complex systems, such as watersheds, clusters of communities, regional land use allocation, and more integrated transportation systems. A systems approach is broader than a single-issue or individual jurisdictional perspective from which problems are usually addressed: for example, if we think in terms of larger systems, we consider not just “transportation systems” but “land use-transportation systems.” Design has not usually been applied at the regional scale because of both jurisdictional constraints and the lack of key elements, such as funding, information, and a conceptual framework. Therefore, a systems approach, seeking to integrate various systems and elements through design measures, is a fundamental principal of this work and is of critical importance. The following objectives adhere to this principle:

Regional Design through an Integrated Systems Approach
Systems that cross jurisdictional boundaries (ecosystems, topographical systems, transportation systems, economic systems, development systems) will be treated at a regional scale.

An Interconnected Mobility Network
Transportation networks will be well connected, region-wide, multi-modal, and inextricably integrated with land use, population density and infrastructure. Transit and multi-purpose trails and a comprehensive pedestrian system will assume greater prominence.

Systems: a set of related elements that interact with at least one other element in the set

*In terms of regional design... systems might include ecological systems, social systems, transportation systems and other similarly interactive and regionally relevant structures.*
Principle 3

Reflect design values equally at all scales, from the site to the region; the big is reflected in the small.

There should be an identifiable sense of place at the neighborhood, city, and regional level, achieved through human-made and natural networks linking a diversity of individual communities. Communities draw a sense of identity both from the complex social and historical influences unique to local context and from a shared sense of belonging to and impacting regional character. Systems such as open space, pedestrian networks, and community structures should function equally well at the regional, municipality, community, neighborhood, and individual scales. Regional design should identify common values that shape our regional character and ways to support those values at all scales.

Livability on a Regional Scale

Individual communities will be distinct, each with unique physical character, yet share common characteristics such as a safe, walkable blend of land uses and a supportive public realm. Regional-scale mobility will be enhanced, connecting new and existing neighborhoods while maintaining a high level of social cohesion. Open space will be connected across jurisdictional boundaries in a

The Residential Development Handbook for Snohomish County Communities notes that regional design efforts can address the relationship between the human environment and growth management strategies. For example, the design of individual single and multiple family residences greatly affects the structure and qualities of our communities and vice versa. Building layout, site plan, appearance and density of residential development affect how far we travel to work, the cost of our homes, how we interact with our neighbors, how much rural farmland is retained and how well the region supports transit systems.
regionally planned network, neighborhoods will be connected to fingers of the network, and smaller-scale open spaces will be included within neighborhoods.

**Coherent Sense of Character on a Neighborhood, City-wide and Regional Scale**

Individuals will be able to identify a coherent sense of place on a neighborhood scale because communities throughout the region are assisted in capitalizing on social and historical assets. Cities will have a central focus for public activity such community buildings and other facilities that support civic engagement and advance public benefits. Citizens will feel part of a regional community, one that can be identified by its special character, physical features, and lifestyle choices.

**Principle 4**

**Transition from a landscape of competition to a landscape of cooperation.**

Until now in the region’s development, urban and economic landscape has been shaped by competition: businesses competing for the prime locations that will ensure customers and efficient production, municipalities competing for development that will bring in revenue, developers competing for land at the lowest price. More efficient land use, effective governance, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability depend on the competitive activities being augmented by cooperative efforts. Principle 4 identifies several areas where greater cooperation, communication, and coordination could advance these objectives and create a greater sense of regional citizenship (see Figure 4).

**Regional Citizenship**

Regional planning and decision-making foster regional citizenship and resource sharing across jurisdictional boundaries. The region’s physical form and distribution of resources will contribute to the social, environmental and economic equity for all citizens.

**Partnership**

Jurisdictions, non-profit agencies and private businesses will participate in collaborative efforts to strengthen regional character.¹ The mutually dependant relationship between urban, rural, agricultural and resource areas will be strengthened for the benefit of the region.

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¹ Training sessions for Integrated Design Process have been very successful for green building and development. This kind of training could also benefit the collaborative process of regional design.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use development practices</th>
<th>Competitive Environment</th>
<th>Cooperative Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businesses compete for land and access</td>
<td>Market Driven. Short term “highest and best” use</td>
<td>Market forces shaped: greater long term efficiencies &amp; collective benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communities compete for high cost land uses &amp; revenue sources</td>
<td>Businesses still compete but in more stable and varied environment (opportunities for broad range of business and development models)</td>
<td>Strategic inter-jurisdictional cooperation: development standards, service provision &amp; business incentives, potential revenue sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing interests</td>
<td>Pitched battles: environmentalists vs. developers &amp; resource industries</td>
<td>Cooperative agreements (e.g.: Fish &amp; Forest agreement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood interests vs. comprehensive objectives and systems</td>
<td>Mechanisms for communication &amp; cooperation between local interests and larger governments or agencies. (top down + bottom up)</td>
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<td>Urban interests vs. rural interests</td>
<td>More explicit focus on resolving conflicting perceptions and interests.</td>
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<td>Organizational roles and practices</td>
<td>Narrowly focused, single objective agency missions</td>
<td>Coalitions between agencies and governments</td>
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<td>Inflexible or confrontational project review &amp; permitting processes</td>
<td>Cooperative agreements. More flexible project review and permitting mechanisms (E.g.: PUDs, contract rezones)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restrictive, circumscribed private &amp; government roles</td>
<td>Active government actions and cooperative agreements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncoordinated activities by individual governments</td>
<td>Cooperative inter-jurisdictional agreements (E.g.: rural corridor planning)</td>
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*Figure 4: This table considers the comparison the competitive and cooperative environments that impact planning, design, and livability*
Monitoring

Goals and benchmarks for physical conditions are established and periodically monitored (such as the example in Figure 5). Basic growth management and planning assumptions as well as regional design strategies are re-evaluated periodically to determine if modifications to policy or practice are necessary. Measurable indices for the following general characteristics are:

- Livability
- Ecological health
- Community vitality
- Non-motorized vehicle access
- Open space
- Visual quality

Figure 5: King County has a well-established benchmark and monitoring program that might be a useful model for monitoring and program assessment.
Chapter Three: A Guided Discussion about the Character of a Region

Purpose of this Section

In Chapter One, design was defined as the relationship between values and form. Because the relationship between value and character (or identity) is important in any design process, this chapter discusses the relationship between regional values and regional character. Activities affecting local character overwhelmingly happen at the local level. Additionally, generating a regional long range plan, such as VISION 2040, means that there is a need to answer certain questions: As a region, what do we want to become and who are we now? As residents of this region we ask ourselves:

- Who are we?
- What makes this place “this place”?
- How do we identify ourselves and how do others identify us?
- What do we cherish and value?
- How can we identify the values that we share?
- How are those values being expressed now and how will they be expressed later?
- How do we make sure that the things we cherish about this region are sustained in the future?

Other parts of this Regional Design Strategy and many parts of PSRC’s VISION 2040 suggest actions to take: policies, strategies, implementation recommendations, actions, measures, work programs, and compendiums. Embedded in these actions and policies is a set of values, and these values are intrinsically related to our sense of who we think we are as a region. By exploring the relationship between values and character, this chapter will supply the reader with one possible argument to support policy implementation.

Over the next 35 years, planning practitioners may find themselves confronted with the question “Why should our local community implement a particular policy or expend resources to take a particular action?” The goal of this chapter is to provide a baseline discussion that might prove helpful in such a situation by considering two points:

- Regional policies come from a regional sense of who we are.
- Regional policies support and will eventually shape a regional sense of who we are.
Identity is a major factor in the quality of life; it represents that synthesis of the relationship between the individual and his or her city. Identity, self esteem, a feeling of belonging-all are closely connected to points of reference that people have about their own city.

Jaime Lerner

*From a forward to 2007 State of the World: Our Urban Future*

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**What do We Mean by Regional Character, and Why is it Important?**

The fundamental idea of a regional character and identity itself is a difficult one. How can one person or one group begin to say *what* it is? How can the idea of regional identity take into account different perspectives of a large and diverse regional population? How can it accommodate changing attitudes and perceptions over time? To explore these questions, a clear vocabulary is needed which can describe the conceptual framework.

**Definition: Visual Image**

The term visual image is used to describe the sum total of mental pictures or impressions that describe a region. While the visual image of the central Puget Sound region varies from one person to another, there may be a set of mental pictures held in common by a preponderance of the region’s citizens that describes a collective image of the region. While it may not be possible to sharply define this collective regional image, the concept is useful because it allows for discussion of shared perceptions about the landscape and how they contribute to a regional sense of character.
Definition: Regional Character

Figure 6 illustrates that the content of regional character includes: the historical, physical, social, economic, and cultural elements that make a place unique; how those elements are arranged; and how those elements relate to the passage of time and the inevitable complexity and change within a region. The content of a region’s character goes beyond identity (a potentially over-simplified collection of icons, symbols, and the latest funky styles). Changes within this inevitable complexity give us our stories of who we are in this place. It is through these stories, and this culture, that we teach ourselves how build the environment around us.

Figure 6: Our perception of regional character is influenced by the region’s distinctive physical elements, the images we have of our region, the activities we engage in, our complex socio-historical context, and the values we hold. There is a circular relationship where our perception of regional character influences our policy development choices, and in turn, implementation of those policies and strategies impacts the way regional character will be perceived in the future. At both large and small scales, design is informed by perception of regional character, and design shapes the physical setting of the region project by project.
We use this cultural context to learn how to read the environment, meaning that we tend to assign cultural values to physical standards. Through time, our values change, our understanding of the world changes and our physical standards change correspondingly. This is one way to describe the way our sense of regional character can shift as new ideas come into existence. (For example, currently, no one familiar with the Bay Area around San Francisco today can conceive of that region without the BART system, but it was nearly impossible for most people to conceive of the BART system before it actually became a physical reality.) Therefore design and policy implementation both have critical roles in influencing the content of regional character.

However, it is rare that people have the luxury to fully examine the links between values, design, and policy development or implementation. There is a tendency instead to want to keep pace with examples from other cities and other regions, rather than to analyze what would be best in this place. And even those good examples that we compare ourselves to or try to imitate are themselves often the result of luck, opportunity, fortune and well-timed events (and not the result of a careful, collective investigation and application of principles and values). The more that individual places can honor the unique history and psychology of a place, at that point in time, by defining who they are and where they are trying to go, the more likely they will be to maintain the political will necessary for long term implementation of policies. This leads to the importance of regional policies and principles as a common baseline from which to start this discussion.

**Framing the Role of Design in This Discussion**

As the diagram in Figure 6 illustrates, the region’s physical elements and characteristics give rise to visual images (individual and collective) of the regional landscape and, at the same time, support characteristic activities. These two, combined with the region’s complex socio-historical context, inform regional character, which is intimately tied to how we see ourselves as a region and how we identify our collective values. Of course, these values are not consistent from person to person or through time. But to an extent, a design strategy for an urban region can identify key aspects of a shared character and supporting actions, which in turn enhance the physical environment.

**Steps for Discussing Regional Character.**

This section describes the steps the Puget Sound Regional Design Team took in order to explore the issue of regional character. These steps are provided here both as an explanation for the illustrations in following section (which uses the Puget Sound as a test case), and to provide a basis for future discussions.
Listing Regional Qualities and Characteristics

Through the course of numerous workshops and events in recent years, we asked ourselves as urban design professionals, “What are the things that make central Puget Sound region distinct? What are the qualities and entities that distinguish the character of this place? How do we see ourselves as a region? How do others see this region from the outside?” To get at these questions, we first compiled a working list.

We recognize that this is not the list which can summarize the identity of this region. This list is not comprehensive, and this list represents only those things that urban designers think about in the course of their profession at this juncture in time. This list does not claim to represent what everyone in the region thinks, or even what the design community will still think years from now. Rather, this list is most valuable as a starting point for future discussions with other groups and communities to begin to answer the question “How do we see ourselves?” If this discussion were to be held by active environmentalists, or festival organizers, or Boeing and Microsoft employees, or a community group from a distressed neighborhood, or by even by the same urban design community in 20 years, it would have different components as a result of each discussion; and some components would overlap. And the idea that these components might shift with time empowers people to know that this list can change. (To see a complete version of this list, please refer to Appendix B.)

General Observations

What can we say about these characteristics now that we have them in one place? We found it easier to divide the list into five subcategories so we can consider the qualities and characteristics that we as urban design professionals commonly associate with the following elements of regional character:

A. The natural environment

B. The built environment

C. The intersection of the natural and the built environments

D. The social, cultural, and economic organization of the region

E. The history of place

Under these subcategories, we found it easier to look at smaller, related sections of the list and derive some general observations. What patterns can we see by looking back at our list? What do these patterns say about the way the region functions now? What do they say about how we think about ourselves as a region?
Review of Relevant Regional Policies and Principles

What are the ways to connect these general observations to policy development and implementation? Regional identity and character are reinforced by policy decisions, and policy decisions and implementation will in turn have an impact on regional identity and character in the long run. The Design Team turned to the regional planning policies, statements of intended regional action, and matched them to the characteristic subcategories. We looked for common threads between the characteristics and observations, which help define a picture of the region, and the policies, which speak to intended regional action and implementation. We also correlated the subcategories to relevant principles (from Chapter Two) to guide our thoughts (see Figure 7). In a case where current regional policies are unavailable, this juncture could be an ideal place to set up a framework for crafting or updating them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcategories of Regional Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Natural Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 All Scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Cooperation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: This table shows the influence of the principles over the way the steering committee dealt with the subcategories of regional characteristics.

Generating Illustrative Examples: What We Can Imagine

This final step uses creative, yet rational, narrative to establish a connection between regional character (in the characteristics and observations) and policy development and implementation. Each subcategory from the original list gets its own set of illustrative examples: What we can imagine. Each example is a collaborative attempt by the Design Team to picture the kind of character our region could have if those policies are implemented, if principles are adhered to, if cherished regional characteristics are passed forward. Each illustrative example looks at future patterns (what the region might look like) and processes (how the region might function on a daily basis within those patterns) at a variety of scales.
Connecting Regional Identity and Character with Policy and Implementation

This section applies all four of the above steps to the central Puget Sound region as a test case and example. The four steps are applied to each of the five subcategories (taken from the initial list of regional qualities and characteristics): natural environment, built environment, intersection between the natural and built environments, social structures, and history.

A. The natural environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics we associate with the natural environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Water surrounds us (proximity to ocean, the Sound, the lakes, the estuaries, the rivers, the rain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mountains (views of the Olympics, the Cascades, the silhouettes of Mt. Rainier, Mt Baker or Mt. Hood)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trees and plants (the evergreens, the silhouette of evergreens on hilltops and bluffs, blackberries, bull kelp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Salmon and other aquatic life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wildlife diversity (orcas &amp; whales, starfish, otters, seabirds, eagles, deer, protected species)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Colors (green, gray, brown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Topography (many hills and valleys, particularly north-south orientation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The rare sunny day (secret gift to those who live here)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list was generated as the product of numerous Design Team workshops.

1. Observations:

These are all powerful visual images that are used again and again to represent the central Puget Sound region. The sheer physical magnitude of these natural features has impressed these elements on the collective imagination of many who live here, yet the vitality of many natural systems is being threatened.

This region has strong natural edges and extensive shorelines, making it easier for people to orient themselves and for people to get a visual and spatial sense of the region from numerous vantage points. The region also has many strong linear physical elements, which are ways to consider linking various landscapes.
2. Summary of Relevant Multicounty Planning Policies and Principles:

Several of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies describe the protection and enhancement of: air and water quality, open space, natural resources, critical areas, native vegetation, freshwater and marine shorelines, watersheds, and the long-term integrity of the natural environment. (For a complete listing of relevant policies, please refer to Appendix B.)

Relevant principle: Principle1 – The natural environment is a primary basis for regional form (see Figure 7).

3. What we can imagine:

Our region is known around the world for its intimately accessible and dramatic natural landscape and for its exemplary stewardship of natural systems. As a society, we have invested substantial amounts of human, fiscal, and regulatory capital in the reparation and protection of the natural environment. Numerous private, non profit and government activities are organized to repair damaged parts of the region’s natural systems, caring for both small and large scales, using adaptive management to sustain landscape-scale ecological processes. This care is reflected in our region’s design aesthetics, which seek to incorporate natural systems and environmental responsibility into all aspects of the built environment (see Figure 8). Socially, we have changed our daily process from one which collectively lives on the environment to one that lives with uncompromised ecological systems.

As a result, natural systems have vigorous integrity and it is easy to see the way ecological systems are fully fused and interconnected with one another in a way that is functional and successful. For example, waterways are cleaner, providing healthy habitat for salmon and other wildlife, restored estuaries are used both as urban buffers and urban amenities, and the region has a comprehensive greenspace network.

Figure 8: There is a more intimate relationship between the urban and natural environments in Puget Sound than in most other regions. For example, marine habitat restoration is an important part of the Olympic Sculpture Park on Seattle’s Central Waterfront. Photo courtesy Anchor Environmental.
B. The built environment

Characteristics we associate with the built environment:

- Architectural monuments (The Tacoma Glass Museum, the EMP, the Seattle Central Library)
- The Space Needle and the Seattle skyline (Smith Tower, Columbia Tower)
- Infrastructure: ferries, north-south freeways, locks, bridges
- Industrial global contributions (Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks, Weyerhaeuser) and national contributions (microbrews, biotech and hi-technology, music, wood industry)
- Military influence
- Tribal influence on space (dichotomy and dialogue, role of tribal lands on regional land use patterns)
- Emphasis on quality residential neighborhoods (fine grained urban form)
- Trends towards mixed use development and tendency to favor big box centers to augment tax base
- Housing affordability is decreasing (renter population on the rise, mobility of young people)
- Increasing density and the desire to become an important regional center (young wealthy and retired moving to downtown areas and condos).
- The linear development along a number of our thoroughfares

This list was generated as the product of numerous Design Team workshops.

1. Observations:

Our infrastructure is the most substantive and unique aspect of this region’s built environment. This region had a tradition of investing in innovative, high quality, well designed, large scale infrastructure projects (see Figure 9). However, in recent years we have viewed infrastructure mainly in functional terms for only one use, forgetting its importance in the landscape and in our everyday lives.

Our current architecture emphasizes the modern and dynamic. However, corporate driven styles tends towards the repetitive. Our architectural monuments are iconic but not necessarily grand. Some unanswered questions remain as to the existence of a neo-northwest architectural style, possibly one which combines native and natural materials with contemporary, high-tech building systems and traditional craftsmanship.
Another big design challenge in this region is the large portion of our built environment that is structured around poorly designed linear arterials. A large amount of our landscape is devoted also to big box center typology, scattered throughout the region. This pattern is likely to change; the structures are temporary, waiting for a future higher and better use of that land. On the other hand, we are currently witnessing an explosion of highly innovative green building technology. Even if the building technologies we currently use in most situations are antiquated in comparison to the latest green building innovations, these industry standards seem poised to change dramatically in the near future.

Overall, urban design plays an important role in understanding the way the built environment is perceived and interpreted, and then in applying that knowledge to the way the built environment continues to be built. The urban design challenge is to create a cohesive unit from a variety of public and private efforts. This goal has been tackled in Tacoma, both along the Thea Foss waterway and at the UW Tacoma campus around Union Station (see Figure 10).

2. Summary of Relevant Multicounty Planning Policies and Principles:

Several of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies focus on the continued development of regional growth centers and compact urban communities. The policies seek to improve or transform underutilized lands, local street patterns, and linear systems. The policies place a high value on sense of place, housing choice, diversity, quality public spaces, urban design, historic preservation, arts, visual and cultural resources and the protection of both manufacturing-industrial centers and military lands from the encroachment of adjacent incompatible use. (For a complete listing of relevant policies, please refer to Appendix B.)

Relevant Principles: Principle 2 – Apply a systems approach, and Principle 4 – Balance competition with cooperation (see Figure 7).

3. What we can imagine

On a local scale, communities are vibrant: people can walk to recreation or take an easy bus ride to a nearby center and job site. Jurisdictions are encouraged to
develop and nurture non-natural identifiers, localized icons and symbols which are authentic to their settings and local in scale. We can perceive that the pieces of our urban environment are integrated into our central places and neighborhoods. For example, large institutional complexes fit into their surroundings and new developments work together, resulting in a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

This integration of built elements also occurs at a large scale so that individual communities are linked to larger urban compositions. Additionally, efforts are made to improve the quality of public investment in infrastructure projects and civic buildings by: holding design competitions, refining rather than ornamenting projects, designing for more than just one use and relating every project to the human scale.

Arterials function better at a human scale because activities are concentrated along a string of well connected centers. One gets a sense of sequence traveling along the arterials or boulevards, which are broken down into a series of nodes. Such facilities make more effective and efficient use of the land and are more thoughtfully seamed and stitched into adjacent neighborhoods.

Big box centers have been adapted to integrate mixed use, residential and commercial space, and improved street patterns in a compact, pedestrian, transit-oriented manner consistent with regional vision. Our region provides guidelines and assistance so that centers can successfully undertake this task.

Our region is capitalizing on its population growth. By focusing nearly 1.6 million people within the urban growth area, we are adding built environment (houses, streets, schools, hospitals, etc.) that takes every opportunity to integrate innovative change. Our development is energy and resource efficient, low impact, and environmentally responsible. Our development is lean and our buildings are healthy.
C. The intersection of the natural and the built environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics we associate with the intersection of the natural and built environments:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Get outside (REI, outdoor sports, recreation, parks that encourage interaction with natural amenities, bike to work, leave urban areas on weekends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interact with the wildlife (aquarium, whale watching, explore tidal pools and touch starfish, watch the salmon runs, visit zoos and botanical gardens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respond to the rain (It rains a lot, tourists see the rain first, cozy wooden interiors, covered walkway, the importance of interior lighting, real Pacific Northwesterners don’t own umbrellas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respond to the water and views (preserve views, limited public and private access to water, proximity to natural amenities increases property value)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fishing industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The water-based ports and industrial areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Salmon culture (in festivals, in restaurants, as activists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seismic and Flooding hazards (impact on built environment and development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increasing interest in both growing and consuming local and organic foods and products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Green Building increasingly desired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connections among these natural environments (Burke Gillman trail, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Interurban Trail) and historical environments (historic or heritage routes and trails).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list was generated as the product of numerous Design Team workshops.

1. Observations:

Beyond its visual presence and power, the region’s natural environment has shaped human activity and local history, and therefore has influenced the regional approach to urbanism. The natural environment is a part of even our most intense urban areas, such as the aquatic habitats which exist along cultural waterfronts (see Figure 8).
Water bodies and topography fragment the urban environment, forcing this region towards multi nucleated forms rather than a highly centralized one.

We have great tradition of excellence in horticulture and landscape architecture. We place a high value on views, sometimes to the point of overbuilding our steep slopes.

Climate change is on our doorstep and impacts on our water supply seem inevitable.

2. Summary of Relevant Multicounty Planning Policies and Principles:

Several of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies support agriculture and forestry, walking and bicycling, food systems, regional identity, natural boundaries, rural and natural resource areas, environmentally sensitive land use management and development practices, health and well-being, and the region’s role in international economy. (For a complete listing of relevant policies, please refer to Appendix B.)

Relevant Principles: Principle 1 – Natural environment is a primary basis for regional form, Principle 2 – Apply a systems approach, Principle 3 – Design at all scales, and Principle 4 – Balance competition with cooperation (see Figure 7).

3. What we can imagine:

In a flight over the region, we see a configuration of well defined centers responding to natural elements and corridors. Natural systems are incorporated within the centers, and the edges of major urban areas are a well defined regional open space network of parks, trails, restored habitats, greenbelts, bluffs, and resource lands (see Figure 11). Our communities, separated by edges, give us definition of space and a span of control.

The identity of individual places builds on indigenous character, both natural and human made. The region is not as Seattle-centric as it was; other centers have more individual cultural services and resources. Because local communities are only loosely connected to each other physically, there is heightened value to
integrating and balancing the built environment with natural systems at the local scale. Our urban fabric includes natural systems as valued amenities, whether these are daylighted creeks or restored shorelines in the middle of dense urban form. By restoring a shoreline as the central focal point for a downtown area (be it Tacoma, Bremerton, Edmonds, Kirkland, or Seattle), this region showcases the high value we place on balancing the human built and natural environments.

On smaller scales, we are no longer content for generic store-bought yards to dominate our region's landscapes. Our notions of landscaping are shaped by rediscovering and capitalizing on regionally indigenous plants. This is amplified by a regional tradition of excellent landscape architecture and horticulture related to Seattle's globally significant system of Olmstead parks and boulevards.

Culturally, we put public investments into the acquisition of damaged lands for restoration and protection. We are more restrictive in how we think about development in environmentally sensitive areas, further limiting an intrusion of the built environment into the natural ecological systems that we value, whether they are steep slopes, estuaries, or riparian buffers. This comes from a recognition that the preservation of those areas is as critical as the technical ability to build there.

Resource lands are a treasured and valuable part of the regional landscape. The region has a viable agricultural system; local food is produced on working farms. Sustainable farming and timber harvest are economically viable and important parts of the regional open space system.

Climate change affects nearly all of our defining regional characteristics, including water and rain. The possible decrease in water supply will have a profound impact on fire hazards as well as on native flora and fauna. How we respond to this major event that is taking place over time speaks to how regional resiliency figures into our decision making.
D. The social, cultural, and economic organization of the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics we associate with the way we think about things and the way we get things done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Growth Management (Urban Growth Areas, Comprehensive Plans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Activism is important (many grassroots movements, importance of neighborhoods within cities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grand plans and strong leadership are lacking, but high profile market individuals are not (Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Howard Schultz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dynamic information and technology-oriented economy and creative class (cosmopolitan, outward and forward looking, high quality of life attracts people to move here and stay here).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Seattle Process (political action takes a long time, even outside of Seattle itself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seattle-centrism (results, both positive and negative, of tension between one major city and its surrounding metropolitan and rural areas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural diversity with a public goal of inclusionary society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding services and facilities and other economic forces shape our region’s identity and drive internal competition within the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Imitation and use of local examples (one Hot Spot competing with another for vitality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community that sustains dynamic arts and culture (high arts such as symphony, ballet and theater, but also underground musical vibrancy and glorious past, literary community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Center for new immigration and addition of new cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An informal atmosphere (polar fleece and jeans to work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The scale of the physical features feels impressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong culture of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highly educated population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This list was generated as the product of numerous Design Team workshops.*
1 Observations:

One of the region’s characteristics is its dynamic, information and technology oriented economy. While an original attraction for moving to the region was the resource based jobs and perhaps later the attractive setting, currently the region is seen as a cosmopolitan, outward and forward looking place. The region has historically been a center for in-migration and the addition of new cultures, adding to the region’s outward-looking perspective (see Figure 12).

The region has a history of local grassroots activism and a general antipathy toward strong leaders, grand plans and top-down governmental structures. It seems that leadership in this region, when it does happen, starts with efforts from below. Many of the region’s defining artistic, business and cultural activities occur outside the arena of formal cultural institutions or large scale organizations.

It seems likely that virtual communities will create tension with more traditional notions of community as related to physical, geographically-defined space.

We evaluate the financing of public infrastructure on a short term and local basis and have a tendency to ignore the long term return on investment and regional benefits. We are currently living with the decisions 20 to 30 years ago not to support the long term investment in regional facilities, such as transit systems and water treatment facilities.
2. Summary of Relevant Multicounty Planning Policies and Principles:

Several of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies address the ways in which schools, rural areas, and regional capital facilities support the regional vision. The policies favor transit-supportive densities, a diversity of family-wage jobs, services for a diverse population, innovative planning techniques to keep growth within urban areas, strategies for strengthening the regional stock of affordable housing, community development as components of transportation projects, and targeted economic opportunities in distressed areas. The policies encourage high performance, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly development standards. *(For a complete listing of relevant policies, please refer to Appendix B.)*

Relevant Principles: Principle 2 – Apply a systems approach, Principle 3 – Design at all scales, and Principle 4 – Balance competition with cooperation (see Figure 7).

3. What we can imagine:

This region takes measures to include human and cultural diversity in its vision. In-migrations of new people are able to find those communities which accommodate a wide range of cultures. Lifestyles and activities that fall outside the mainstream are incorporated into pre-existing communities, creating more vibrant new communities and building on local cultural and historical amenities. This cultural and creative diversity adds a dynamism to the region, expanding its economic base as well as strengthening its sense of identity.

Across the region, communities incorporate inclusionary infill-development to ensure that affordable incubator spaces are available to low and moderate levels of income and that these spaces are integrated with market rate development in addition to being close to services, transit, and employment options. Through region-wide and consistent inclusionary policies, our regional culture promotes an equitable quality of life for all.

Everyone has good creative access to an open and transparent decision making process. On a large social scale, people maintain an open dialogue about the ways in which virtual community impacts more traditional definitions of community. Our tax and fiscal policies support growth management and quality urban design.

The region has made a dramatic investment in transportation improvements to simultaneously enhance region-wide mobility and inter-jurisdictional cohesion.
E. The history of place

Characteristics we associate with the history of this place:

- Settlement clustered near and interacted with water (water as transportation)
- Both borrowing from and ignoring native cultural precursors to European culture (appreciation of natural setting, salmon festivals, overfishing, ignorance of prior uses of landscape)
- Extraction (Logging, Mining)
- Volatile boom and bust economic cycles
- Rapid post-war expansion: most of the communities already existed, and they expanded outwards and grew together; some retained their historical core while others did not (opposed to California, expansion put new built environment where nothing had been before)
- Historic districts and cultural landscapes
- Agricultural roots
- Denny Hill sluicing (total willingness to reshape the land)
- Vestiges of original platting of small lots and tight streets on hillsides and early settlement and development patterns

This list was generated as the product of numerous Design Team workshops.

1. Observations:

Regional character and identity flow from history and culture as well as physical setting. Our character now is determined by the sequencing of events that have come before, as well as the extent to which we collectively acknowledge or ignore those events (see Figure 13). Historical influence on the present can be thought of as a working landscape to be passed to future generations holistically and systematically, rather than as a collection of items to be preserved individually.

Figure 13: The region’s working landscapes are an important part of its identity. We will all lose a part of our history when the last saw mill closes down.
Many of the region’s historic and cultural resources are concentrated in urban centers, which are particularly susceptible to change given the current growth strategies and our history of volatile boom and bust cycles. On the other hand, our rural and agricultural landscapes are an important part of our historic legacy and they are also susceptible to changes and development (see Figure 14).

Many communities have lost their traditional commodity base. We are experiencing a new kind of cultural settlement pattern now; the suburbanization movement now is different from post WWII suburbanization. Growth used to follow infrastructure, and now infrastructure is trying to match outward patterns of growth migration.

We have not always recalled the sense of place which the region provided to native peoples and cultures prior to the arrival of European settlers.

We are revitalizing our historic town centers and communities.

2. Summary of Relevant Multicounty Planning Policies and Principles:

Several of the VISION 2040 draft multicounty planning policies preserve regional historic, visual, and cultural landscapes and support urban design, historic preservation, and the arts. (For a complete listing of relevant policies, please refer to Appendix B.)

Relevant Principles: Principle 2 – Apply a systems approach, and Principle 4 – Balance competition with cooperation (see Figure 7).
3. What we can imagine

In the same way that the region values natural amenities by daylighting creeks, this region also daylights its own unique cultural history. There is high emphasis on education that connects us to a better understanding of native perspectives on the surrounding landscape. We invest resources on the identification, location and preservation of cultural, working and Native American landscapes; these are integrated into our perceived heritage as historical or thematic districts rather than as disconnected points. This appreciation and conservation of our history counterbalances the future-oriented advances of regional development.

On a local scale, spaces are enhanced so that this social and historical narrative can be articulated. Communities value the spaces that can host festivals, parades, and events that celebrate the regional relationship to diverse history. Pieces of our regional past are preserved and become a complex but integral part of our current character and identity.

General Outcomes and Conclusions

Based on this preliminary exploration of regional character, we can draw a number of tentative general conclusions about what is important to urban design professionals when thinking about the future of this region:

- **Diversity** is a key attribute in all senses of the word: diversity of culture, space, design, use patterns, perspectives, and natural systems. The challenge will be maintaining diversity in as rapid growth patterns and corporate and marketing dominate regional development.

- This region is **dynamic**. Tension between opposing perspectives lends vitality to regional character:
  - Natural environment vs. intense urban environment – the two are relatively close in proximity here as compared to other US regions.
  - Regional design style vs. corporate architecture
  - Neighborhood autonomy vs. city governments
  - Outward looking cosmopolitan view vs. insular focus on local concerns
  - Virtual community vs. traditional face-to-face communities
  - Historical context vs. rapid development
  - Outward, international influences vs. the traditional resource-based economy and emphasis on an individualistic, outdoor-oriented lifestyle.

The challenge will be sustaining a balance among these characteristics so that diversity and dynamism are maintained.
Chapter Four: Strategies to Shape the Region’s Physical Structure

Overview

Participants at the summer 2006 work sessions suggested numerous actions to achieve regional design and planning objectives. The Design Team found that actions can be grouped by their physical settings and thus developed a series of strategies to address various components of the regional landscape. Each strategy outlines a program for innovative and collaborative action on issues which would benefit from a regional approach and which include components to protect and enhance valuable local and regional resources.

The Design Team detailed measures to initiate these strategies, compiling a Compendium of examples, models, programs, and resources to assist local governments and organizations in pursuing them (see Appendix D). The map in Figure 15 is a working visualization of the general geographic locations for all six of the strategies, which include:

1. **Continue the development of a hierarchy of urban centers and focal points.**

   The region has made impressive progress implementing a vision\(^2\) to create more intense, pedestrian and transit-oriented mixed-use urban centers. This strategy focuses on continuing that effort by sharing information and local experience from the last decade and by coordinating the growth of neighboring centers for greater efficiency and mutual benefit.

   There are new models for concentrating growth that are proving effective but are not recognized in PSRC’s regional planning. Some of these models are presented here as a means of developing mixed-use communities outside current centers. Several groupings of regional centers, such as Tukwila, Renton, Burien, and SeaTac, are emerging that could act as frames for exciting metropolitan complexes, and this strategy explores such possibilities.

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\(^2\) The original VISION 2020 strategy was adopted in 1990 and updated in 1995.
2. Create a green infrastructure and open space network.

A network of open spaces—including wild, rural, and urban open spaces, marine and fresh waters, agricultural and forest lands, critical areas, parks, trails, greenbelts, and green streets—is critical for the region’s environmental sustainability, recreation, visual identity, and community livability. Numerous local governments, public agencies, and interest groups are working on individual elements of this system. This strategy advocates coordinating these efforts for greater efficiency and preparing a collaborative open space plan for the region that identifies priority actions, implementation tools, and funding mechanisms. Examples and information sources are presented to suggest methods for such integration.

3. Recycle Existing Urban Areas.

Many of the land forms, ecological systems, land use patterns, and transportation and infrastructure systems are essentially linear in nature. Because they usually extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries, they can best be addressed at the regional level. Moreover, these are the systems that connect communities, sustain the ecology, frame landscapes, define our visual character, and, in general, tie the region together. This strategy calls for more focused attention and collaborative efforts on these elements, particularly on restructuring or upgrading land use and transportation systems where development and multi-modal transportation improvements should be better integrated.

4. Transform industrialized estuaries and floodplains.

The region’s industrialized estuaries and floodplains, such as the Duwamish, Green, Cedar, Snohomish and Puyallup Rivers, are critical to both the regional economy and ecology and offer opportunities for redevelopment and environmental restoration. They are also generally located on geologically hazardous and flood-prone areas. The long-term use of industrial lands is an open question because there has been no comprehensive regional study of future industrial activities and their needs. Therefore, this strategy begins with identifying short and long-term industrial land use needs and proposes measures to better integrate ecological
restoration, economic development, recreational facilities, and gray field redevelopment of urbanized estuaries and floodplains.

5. **Protect threatened rural areas and resource lands.**

Retaining the rural and resource-based land uses outside the urban growth area has long been recognized as a particular challenge. At the September 2007 workshop, participants exploring this issue noted that some edges of the urban growth area are more susceptible to urban encroachment than others. This strategy calls for identifying those areas in greater detail and focusing efforts on protecting them through a variety of measures, including, land use controls, transfer of development rights, purchase of development rights, and rural design guidelines.

6. **Restructure portions of automobile-oriented suburban areas.**

The large area encompassing the arc of suburban development around the Puget Sound includes portions of many of the elements listed above, such as linear land use and transportation systems. While the urban center strategy has been quite successful, vast portions of this area remain in low-intensity, auto-oriented land uses and residential areas without walkable access or local services. This strategy recommends a variety of techniques to diversify and intensify portions of automobile-oriented suburban areas to create more livable communities. Because restructuring much of the suburban single-family areas will be difficult, the strategy emphasizes identifying special opportunities, such as near high capacity transit stations and transitioning commercial strips.
Figure 15: This map compiles the conceptualized geographic extent of all six of the strategies detailed in this chapter. (Full versions of each strategy map can be found in Appendix C.)
Recommended Strategies

The description of each of these strategies includes:

- **Issues and context:** The conditions that are to be addressed and the reasons for the strategy.

- **A statement of what the strategy entails and an explanation of some basic concepts.**

- **Goals and policies supporting the strategy.** These are summarized from VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies.

- **Priority actions.** Recommended actions that PSRC or other entities can undertake to initiate the strategy’s implementation.

- **Initial examples to illustrate how design elements of the strategy can be applied are compiled in the Compendium, Appendix D. Some of the models are new conceptual ideas while others describe practices and projects that exemplify the types of actions recommended.**

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**Note on all the maps illustrating these strategies:**
The maps which accompany this chapter are conceptual and do not necessarily accurately indicate the location or extent of features shown. For example, the brown strips indicating where priority should be given to protect threatened rural areas are not based on the extensive analysis that would be required to map such areas. Additionally, the colors do not imply that the strategy would be directed to the whole area shown. For example, it is not the intent to create open space throughout the “green fingers” shown on the map. The strategy is to protect, enhance, create and connect open spaces within those fingers, but it is acknowledged that the open spaces would only encompass a modest portion of the land uses within those areas shown in green.
1. Continue the Development of a Hierarchy of Urban Centers

Issues and Context

The 1990 VISION 2020 plan and the 1995 Update emphasized the establishment of higher intensity mixed-use centers connected by a multimodal transportation network. These earlier editions presented compelling descriptions of the way in which centers could provide for more efficient land use and transportation systems and attractive living conditions. This strategy has worked well. Many municipalities have taken ambitious steps to create urban mixed-use centers. These range from the dramatic revitalization of urban centers, such as Bremerton (see Figure 16) and Tacoma, the continued intensification in Seattle, Bellevue, and Kirkland, and the development of new downtown districts, such as in Kent and Renton, and the creation of an all new center in Mill Creek.

Recommendations

While the creation and enhancement of urban centers is accomplished by individual municipalities and is proceeding well, there are a few opportunities where regionally based support and facilitation could enhance local efforts, namely:

1. Create, or at least support, means of sharing urban center development techniques to assist local efforts. Individual municipalities have learned many practical lessons about urban center development. These lessons, tools, and best practice examples should be compiled and made available to other communities. Information sharing activities might include: mini-conferences, workshops or symposiums to discuss a special topic; research reports; case studies to explore new techniques; or compilation of relevant examples. Special topics could include:

   - Public-private partnership techniques (example: Kent Station, see Figure 17)
• Methods of providing open space and guidelines for urban open space
• Building an urban center near a large institutional or regional facility
• Multicriteria analysis of public actions (e.g., public costs of encouraging urban center development vs. long-term revenues)
• Use of market and feasibility analyses in urban center development
• Design review techniques
• Funding of public improvements

PSRC, in its role as an information source and coordination organization, would be a likely initiator of this activity. The Municipal Research Center, local American Planning Association chapter, Futurewise, or CTED are likely partners and may lead certain efforts.

2. **Encourage new models for urban centers.** PSRC has established particular definitions for regional growth centers. Some of the counties have more extensive hierarchies of central places, while other established areas would benefit from creating walkable, mixed-use concentrations of development. For example, there are potential nodes along arterials and commercial strips (especially at transit stops) where there is currently no opportunity to meet urban center criteria but where increased pedestrian-oriented mixed-use development would serve regional growth management and local neighborhood interests. Similar situations occur in outmoded shopping centers, shopping centers being redeveloped, key locations in large suburban residential tracts, and unincorporated urban areas within the urban growth area.

These areas should be recognized, particularly as places where the urban center development techniques recommended above are also appropriate. Part of this recommendation is also to recognize the important contribution of these different types of urban concentrations and to ensure that they receive appropriate levels of funding and support, especially when opportunities for redevelopment occur as part of transportation improvements.

3. **Coordinate the development of nearby urban centers and integrate their functions for greater efficiency.** Within the region, there are several
groupings of urban centers which are in close proximity to one another, especially in suburban areas; these groupings would benefit from inter-jurisdictional coordination, improved transportation links, and integrated economic development and land use planning strategies. (See Figure 18 as well as Figure 36 in Appendix C for the full map.)

For example, in some cases one city’s center has a larger population base, while another acts as an employment or retail center. Linking these two or three centers together with high-capacity transit might benefit each jurisdiction. Or perhaps two jurisdictions with close urban centers might collaborate on a regional park with trails to both communities.

Cooperative efforts might begin with discussions regarding mutual interests and progress to cooperative planning, intergovernmental agreements regarding land use and infrastructure (such as the Bellevue Redmond Overlake Transportation Study), and finally, where appropriate, some form of revenue or cost sharing. Admittedly, this is an ambitious goal, but the rewards for such an effort could be great. For example, by working together and thinking of themselves as spatially connected, a group of municipalities along a transit line could more effectively lobby and increase their priority for high capacity transit improvements.

**Supporting Policies**

VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies call for providing a regional framework for designating and evaluating centers. Additional policies address the development of other types of centers and activity nodes, as well as priority funding for centers.

**Priority Actions**

1. PSRC, the University of Washington, or other agencies or institutions should prepare guidance materials to assist local governments in developing centers, including new concepts in different types of centers.
2. Create a Green Open Space Network

Issues and Context
Open space is critical for the region’s ecological sustainability, livability, resource conservation, and visual identity. Open space accomplishes many functions, including those addressing:

- Ecological systems
- Recreation and human health
- Access and circulation
- Visual identity
- Resource land preservation
- Livability, especially in urban centers

The region is especially blessed with open space resources. Wide areas in the Cascade Mountains are in public ownership. The sound and lakes act as large visual and recreational open spaces. Agricultural valleys still maintain some of their open, rural character. The beginnings of an extensive regional trail system are in place, and local governments have developed a spectrum of much loved public parks.

However, in order to further achieve the open space functions noted above, the region must take further action to upgrade its open space systems as a comprehensive whole. The following challenges still remain:

- **Connectivity.** Open spaces are more used if they are connected in linear networks and trail systems. While the region has made great strides in this regard, there are critical missing trail links and unrealized opportunities for extending greenbelts and linear open spaces.

- **Enhancement of Ecological Systems.** Open space protection and enhancements are needed for protection of wildlife habitats, salmon recovery, and, more fundamentally, the general health of aquatic systems.

- **Integration.** To be most effective in achieving recreation and community livability, open spaces must be integrated with surrounding development. In these instances, the design, location, and relationship to surroundings are important.

- **Use of Streets, Boulevards, Utility Easements, and Other Resources.** Because open space is so expensive, especially in urban areas, the use of streets and other lands—as well as public-private partnerships—is key to meeting local and regional greenspace needs.

- **Protection of Existing Resources.** Many of the region’s most loved open spaces are privately owned agricultural lands and forested areas. Actions may be required to ensure that these lands remain in resource-based uses.
Figure 19: Several non-government organizations and local governments are actively working on elements of open space planning. Some are for specific jurisdictions, others focus on trails and still others pursue ecological objectives. The key is to combine these efforts and establish a more comprehensive approach maximizing all objectives, setting priorities, leveraging opportunities and building regional consensus for action.
Numerous local governments, agencies, and volunteer groups are currently working to upgrade the amount and quality of open space in the region (see Figure 19). Most parks departments are implementing comprehensive park plans, and some local planning departments are ensuring that new development either contributes funds for or includes usable open space. Several regional trails are being improved segment by segment, and some new highway improvements, such as the SR 520 bridge replacement, include separated bikeways and open space improvements. In terms of environmental efforts, Watershed Resource Inventory and Assessment teams have prepared habitat conservation plans that identify protection and restoration measures in each watershed, and The Nature Conservancy has identified priority habitats most important to the region’s biodiversity that are threatened with development. Snohomish, King, and Pierce County have each undertaken a separate sustainable agriculture program. Non-governmental organizations such as the Cascade Land Conservancy, Seattle 2100, and land trusts are working on their own initiatives.

Recommendations

Figure 20 shows the geographic conceptualization of what a regional open space plan could look like which would organize and support these various efforts for maximum benefit. Such a plan would:

- Present a clear vision of how the various efforts and recommended actions would result in a regional open space system serving ecological, visual, recreational, economic, and community objectives.
- Create greater collaboration between the various entities improving the area’s open spaces.

Figure 20  Initial conceptual identification of key green corridors. (See also Figure 37 in Appendix C for the full map.)
• Identify priorities for regional funding, including key missing links in trail systems, shoreline restoration projects, projects for communities deficient in open space, and special opportunities.

• Include a funding and implementation mechanism, such as a Regional Open Space Investment District, similar to the Regional Transportation Investment District. Other implementation measures might include a regional transfer of development rights or purchase of development rights program or incentives to keep resource lands in active production.

• Develop tools and techniques to address common issues within the region, such as measures to provide open space in highly urbanized areas and in unincorporated urban areas outside the urban growth area, agricultural land retention, use of streets and other resources as open space, and bicycle facility design in downtown situations.

• Create regional open space linkages. A fundamental concept from the Design workshops was the notion of water systems and associated open spaces extending upland with the arc of agricultural, forested, and park lands, while fingers of green from those lands extend in towards the water.

• Integrate open space improvements with land use, transportation, and economic development planning. For example, the transformation of industrial estuaries will provide an opportunity to extend some of the green infrastructure along the region’s waterways. While open space should be a part of urban center and station area development, the green space should be leveraged to provide development incentives and economic benefits as well.

PSRC, because of its regional coverage and comprehensive growth management and transportation responsibilities, would be a likely entity to lead in the preparation of a regional open space plan.

Supporting Policies

VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies call for identifying, preserving, and enhancing significant regional open space. The VISION 2040 draft plan includes a proposed implementation action calling for the development of a regional open space strategy.

Priority Actions

1. In conjunction with other entities, develop a regional open space plan integrating current open space, environmental, and comprehensive planning activities.

2. Initiate funding mechanisms for regional open space acquisition and development.
3. Redevelopment Opportunities – Recycling Existing Urban Areas

Issues and Context

Major portions of the urban region have significant vacant or underutilized land in previously developed areas – these sites used to have, or may still have, buildings, parking, and other uses. Given the pattern of historic development along our waterways and transportation routes, many areas for possible redevelopment or infill are linear in character and function. (See Figure 21 and also Figure 38 in Appendix C for a full map.) This pattern has granted unbalanced emphasis on transportation systems at the expense of the land use development that those systems infringe upon.

Figure 21  Areas to focus redevelopment opportunities.  (See also Figure 38 in Appendix C for the full map.)

This strategy, which rethinks the more linear-type development of the region's past, is critical because:

- Much of our current linear land use patterns, especially along roadways, is counterproductive to community development and degrades the performance of transportation systems.

- Even using current planning and design practices, it has proven very difficult to redevelop the land along these linear systems into configurations which are more suitable for a human scale and which are better integrated into surrounding neighborhoods.
• Transit and transportation will continue to connect nodes from one jurisdiction to the next, so we need collaborative and shared strategies.

• There is the opportunity to create a distinct sense of place and integration of land uses and transportation systems at individual activity nodes and transit station areas.

• Movement is primarily point-to-point. Because it is important to integrate mobility, land use, and the environment, we need strategies to seam the mobility systems from activity nodes into adjacent neighborhoods and districts.

Where redevelopment opportunities occur along natural systems, such as rivers, shorelines, valleys and ridgelines, infill and new development can be designed and constructed in a way that helps to enhance the natural functions of these systems. Along key arterials and thoroughfares, opportunities for infill and redevelopment should be pursued in a more holistic manner that coordinates land use and transportation planning. For example, roadways should be reconstructed to become multimodal facilities that better accommodate transit, walking, biking and the movement of goods, in addition to automobiles. Previous strip development should be refocused around nodes and activity points along linear travel routes.

Context-sensitive design is a desired approach for considering the total community and environmental setting, thereby linking transportation decisions with land use and vice versa. Such an approach is collaborative and interdisciplinary and involves various stakeholders to ensure that transportation facilities (and adjacent properties) are redeveloped in a manner that fits the given physical setting while preserving scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources.

Numerous municipalities and communities in the region are attempting to redevelop commercial strips (see Figure 22). Examples of successful street reconstruction projects and redevelopment of strips into higher density nodes and hubs exist throughout the region, such as in University Place in Pierce County and Shoreline in King County. The recommendations below build on these efforts and are intended to help create more efficient, more functional, and more livable districts that complement our primary regional growth centers.
Seattle Housing Authority’s New Holly and Othello Station leverages a comprehensive set of LRT, park, and community development actions to create a new neighborhood in the Rainier Valley corridor.

Edmonds is working with property owners to revitalize portions of the Aurora corridor. Innovative ideas such as a “North International District have emerged.

Lake City Way illustrates how street improvements and rezoning/community development efforts can transform an auto-oriented strip; although it took nearly 20 years to achieve the high density mixed use development.

PSRC conducted the “Rural Town Centers and Corridors study which identified practices to better combine highway design and rural community development and resulted in funds for similar rural corridor improvements.

Figure 22: Examples of strip redevelopment projects
Recommendations

1. **Focus on specific areas that provide opportunities for redevelopment and transit.** While properties along many stretches of older highways and arterials are sometimes sandwiched between the street in front of them and single family neighborhoods to their rear, there are some nodes and intersections where larger, mixed use development could occur. Additionally, there are other sections with near by amenities or institutions that might support desirable residential neighborhoods. Frequent and reliable transit can also serve as a catalyst for redevelopment.

2. **Consider all major transportation projects as community development projects.** Part of the funds for any major arterial, highway or transit corridor project should include a significant community redevelopment component that employs the full complement of public and private land use redevelopment strategies. Redevelopment of poorly performing properties may be cost effective for the local community in the long run. A pilot project would be useful for initiating this proposal. In addition to allocating resources to community development, other techniques would set a strong framework for integrating transportation and land use. For example, Seattle’s street classification system includes a consideration of adjacent land uses and community setting, and Tacoma’s street reconstruction supporting its light rail link is creating a much more attractive development setting.

3. **Reconstruct automobile-dominant arterials as multimodal facilities.** In the urban region, thoroughfares should be redesigned and rebuilt to better accommodate transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and goods movement, along with vehicular traffic. Redesigning arterials to become multimodal boulevards provides an increased impetus to foster redevelopment and infill that is more transit-oriented. Models for new clusters of development may be similar to those being built in response to the LINK light rail system. A recent example is the reconstruction of Aurora Avenue in Shoreline with a Business and Transit (BAT) access lane which makes transit more efficient. Landscaping improvements along the segment create a better environment – both physically and aesthetically – for the community and for economic development. Transit systems are not the only transportation projects that can foster desirable redevelopment. Bicycle trails and greenbelts are proving to be an attractive amenity that can encourage residential growth and should be used as a development incentive.

4. **Utilize emerging public-private development techniques to build better development.** Reconstruction of older arterials and redevelopment of adjacent properties particularly worthy of public attention and resources and also attracts private sector investments. A program to encourage local governments to foster arterial redevelopment might lead to greater progress, especially if it can be combined with physical street improvements that will alter the character of the street and access to adjacent properties.
5. **Consider the sequential experience and aesthetic qualities in the design of transportation systems.** Of course, transportation designers already consider aesthetics, but too often landscaping, special features or simply the cleanliness of street elements do not receive the attention they merit. Also, the quality of many streets varies from community to community along an arterial or highway. This recommendation is for designers to take a more ambitious look at roadway aesthetics, especially as a part of an area's redevelopment. Additionally, the sequence of views, vistas and spaces that travelers experience as they move from section to section should be considered, as this is perhaps the most common way people experience the region and also contributes heavily to people’s visual image of the region. Low impact development techniques can be introduced that create innovative approaches to dealing with stormwater runoff from streets and roadways. Boulevard treatments, with tree canopies and other landscape improvements, are visually pleasing and are known to reduce surface temperatures and pollutants.

**Supporting Policies**

VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty policies that call for integrated and interdisciplinary approaches at all levels of planning, transformation of underutilized lands to higher density mixed use areas that complement centers and existing neighborhoods, encouraging alternatives to driving alone, and increasing travel options.

**Priority Actions**

1. Initiate a program to plan selected areas around high-capacity transit stops. This might be a cooperative effort between Sound Transit, local transit providers, and PSRC.

2. Conduct a pilot study of a small redevelopment site along an arterial which would otherwise present redevelopment challenges.

3. Study the option of more assertive public redevelopment efforts such as a public development authority for a specific corridor or set of corridors. Explore the option of urban renewal actions along appropriate highway sections.

4. Encourage local jurisdictions to develop redevelopment plans that include design measures, similar to the PSRC Rural Town Centers and Corridor project.

5. Initiate an effort to direct transportation projects to include community redevelopment funding. This would be a more pro-active approach to mitigation and a way to leverage the transportation project with development that increases multimodal transportation.
4. Transform Industrialized Estuaries and Floodplains

**Issues and Context**

Puget Sound’s estuaries are potentially among the most biologically productive ecosystems in the region. They are critical to the proper functioning of marine nearshore habitats and the watershed as a whole, making their restoration a key part of salmon recovery efforts. Likewise, environmentally healthy floodplains and their systems of river channels, wetlands, and plant communities are essential for critical ecological processes which are in turn necessary for healthy aquatic and terrestrial habitats, water quality, and flood hazard minimization (see Figure 24). Unfortunately, most of our urban estuaries and floodplains have been heavily developed, frequently for industrial and commercial activities. Vitally productive mudflats and salt marshes have been dredged and diked and upland wetlands filled and paved. Natural river channels, so important for salmon migration, have been encased in concrete. As a result, only a fraction of the ecological benefits of Puget Sound’s estuaries and floodplains remain.

From a human use standpoint, industrialized areas have been critical to the region’s economy, providing facilities for water-dependent activities such as ports, boat construction, processing of materials shipped by water, and marinas (see Figure 23). However, as the importance of waterborne transport and

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**Figure 24:** Biologically productive and ecologically balanced estuaries and floodplains.

**Figure 23:** Industrial areas critical for economic vitality
industry has lessened over time, high-intensity water-dependent industry has been in many cases replaced by nonwater-oriented commercial uses. Additionally, the river systems extending from the sound to the mountains are seen as a potential public amenity, as part of a regional open space and trail system. Portions of the river systems also pass through or near urban centers, where they could foster ecologically sensitive mixed-use redevelopment.

The challenge, then, is to transform these urbanized estuaries and floodplains into more ecologically productive, efficient, multi-use areas that further ecological, economic, recreational, and community development objectives (see Figure 25).

1. Determine need for industrial space, then
2. Upgrade existing industrial facilities, and
3. Add compatible redevelopment, and
4. Improve infrastructure - all with environmental restoration and sustainable development techniques.

Figure 25: Transforming the industrial landscape shown in Figure 23. Diagram courtesy MAKERS Architecture
Recommendations

Numerous municipalities, port districts, governmental agencies, and organizations are working to restore urban shorelines and link trail and recreation systems. What is missing, at least on some estuaries, is first, a comprehensive, organized approach and second, incorporation of redevelopment to achieve multiple objectives (see Figure 26 and also Figure 39 in Appendix C for a full map). Therefore, the following steps are recommended:

1. **Identify current and future regional needs for industrial lands, particularly those dependent upon proximity to the water (water-dependent uses).**

   Better understanding of the region’s needs for types, locations, and amount of industrial land is critical for economic development and land use planning, as well as for estuary and floodplain restoration and redevelopment.

2. **Identify priority shoreline and environmental restoration projects.**

   The Waterfront Resource Inventory Assessment (WRIA) plans have already identified a comprehensive set of restoration projects, and new shoreline master programs will include comprehensive, jurisdiction-wide shoreline restoration plans. So, much of this step will already be accomplished.

3. **Identify priority park, open space, and trail needs and opportunities.**

   Most jurisdictions have already identified desired open space and trail elements.
4. **Identify potential redevelopment sites.**

Most urban estuaries, even in intensely developed areas, contain unused or underused sites. Some of these have access to navigable waters but others are located on shallow waters of marginal utility for water-dependent uses.

5. **Based on information from items 1 through 4 above; prepare a comprehensive redevelopment and restoration strategy for the estuaries and floodplains.**

As noted above, most of the base information (except for cost of industrial land needs) has been accomplished. The key is to actively combine those objectives across jurisdictions and to focus on redevelopment as a tool to achieve environmental, economic, and recreational objectives. In establishing different areas for various uses and restoration activities, preference should be given, in descending priority, for:

a. Water-dependent industries, environmental restoration, and public access.

b. Other water-dependent activities.

c. Uses and activities that use the shoreline as an amenity (water-enjoyment uses).

Various mixes of compatible uses should be encouraged; for example: build residential development (especially as part of mixed-use development), where restoration and public access is provided, where it is compatible with nearby uses, and where water-dependency is not a high priority.

6. **Prepare an action strategy to implement the plan.**

The implementation program should identify use regulations, development standards, or design guidelines to direct new development, as well as a list of priority capital improvements. A coalition organization of affected governments, agencies, organizations, and stakeholders may be necessary to coordinate implementation.

The three salient aspects of such redevelopment or restoration plans are: first, to leverage and coordinate existing activities toward a larger vision; second, to think in more creative terms about mixing uses along industrialized shorelines; and third, to build cooperation among all participants.

Success will largely be dependent on a coalition of governments, agencies, and organizations articulating a compelling case for action—and then sustained cooperative effort over time. But linking economic, environmental, and community objectives on this issue can bring results. For example, PSRC’s VISION 2040 document incorporates a substantial environmental element that the strategy to transform industrialized estuaries will support.
Supporting Policies
VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies address improving air and water quality, soils, and natural systems to ensure the health of people, fauna, and flora. They also promote the use of innovative environmentally sensitive development practices and the redevelopment of brownfield sites.

Priority Actions
Two actions are recommended to initiate this strategy:

1. Conduct a study to forecast the amount, type, and location of industrial lands needed in the short and long-term future, especially water-dependent industrial sites.

2. Conduct a pilot study for an estuary and floodplain restoration or redevelopment plan to test the application of the strategy described above. This pilot study would follow a process similar to the one PSRC employed in the Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program.

5. Protect Threatened Rural Areas and Resource Lands

Issues and Context
Current vesting laws in Washington state continue to allow some urban-type growth to creep into rural areas and resource lands. Some areas just outside the urban growth area are particularly susceptible to new growth for several reasons, including:

- There is no natural or ownership barrier to development—such as a water body, steep cliff, or public lands.
- There is extensive development pressure due to good access or especially desirable land.
- Ownership is in smaller parcels, which makes it difficult to use as resource land but easy to develop.
• Some of the area has already been developed into residential or commercial uses.

Retaining the open character and resource function of these areas will be especially difficult. Additionally, some lands are especially valuable for ecological, visual, and recreational reasons (see Figure 27). For example, The Nature Conservancy has compiled a profile of areas that are both key to maintaining biodiversity and threatened by development (see Figure 28).

![Map of Puget Sound region showing conservation priorities.](image)

**Figure 28:** Nature Conservancy has mapped areas in the central Puget Sound region that are both essential to biodiversity within this ecoregion and threatened by development pressures.

Numerous small lots platted prior to the Growth Management Act that are gradually being developed. This development erodes rural character and exacerbates transportation demands in rural and suburban areas.
Recommendations

1. Identify and focus rural and resource land preservation efforts on those areas that are most threatened and valuable.

![Map of Protect threatened rural areas]

*Figure 29: Conceptualization of areas of the urban growth area that may be susceptible to additional growth pressures. (See also Figure 40 in Appendix C for the full map.)*

The map in Figure 29 (and the full map in Figure 40 in Appendix C) is conceptual only, so a detailed inventory of those areas should be undertaken. All available rural and resource protection tools should be considered (illustrated in Figure 30 and Figure 31, including:

1. Purchase and transfer of development rights programs (PDRs and TDRs).
2. Tax incentives.
3. Conservation zoning ordinances.
4. Rural design guidelines.
5. Low-impact development standards.

2. Explore, refine, and implement rural and resource land preservation tools.

Many of the tools named above have been used in isolated cases. A comprehensive and in-depth study regarding the utility of these tools should be undertaken, perhaps by conducting some case studies to test them.
Supporting Policies

VISION 2040's draft multicounty planning policies call for sustaining the ecological functions and resource value of rural lands, using innovative and environmentally sensitive land use management and development policies and applying various tools to prevent fragmentation of rural lands.

Priority Actions

1. PSRC should identify developmental threats to rural and resource lands and develop mitigation measures to address these threats.

2. PSRC, in partnership with the counties, the University of Washington, and CTED, should conduct a study identifying useful planning and design tools to protect rural and resource lands from development.
Figure 31: Tools for protecting threatened rural areas susceptible to suburban development outside the urban growth area

Protection of these areas will require a variety of land preservation tools, including:

1. Conservation Plats
2. Transfer of Development Rights
3. Purchase of Development Rights
4. Rezone
5. Environmental Management
6. Open space planning
7. Coordination with habitat and water quality protection
6. Restructure Portions of Auto-Oriented Suburban Areas

Issues and Context

Seen from a regional perspective, or from the 3,000-foot-high vantage point, the arc of suburban development—from Marysville south to South Hill in Puyallup and northward up the eastern margin of the Kitsap Peninsula—is relatively homogeneous and diffused. Composed mainly of tracts of low-density single-family residences, crisscrossed by arterials with commercial strips, and punctuated by shopping centers of various sizes, this mid to late-20th Century land use pattern has proven attractive to many families. This suburban land use structure has several disadvantages; namely, it is auto-reliant, supports only minimal transit service, and does not typically create cohesive and distinct neighborhoods and housing choices. (See Figure 32 and also see Figure 41 in Appendix C for the full map.)

While these characterizations are gross generalizations, it is clear that many areas within the suburban arc and outside of the urban centers would benefit greatly from some restructuring to provide:

- More walkable neighborhoods, with convenient commercial and transit services.
- Greater housing choices.
- More efficient land use.
- Greater visual diversity and identity.

Most of the incorporated areas within the suburban arc are largely developed, but there are also large unincorporated areas that are at least only partially developed. Most of these unincorporated areas are rapidly developing, generally without the community structure to provide livable, walkable neighborhoods or efficient land use patterns. Immediate action is needed if these areas are to provide viable, sustainable communities.

There are two different conditions to address: largely developed areas

Figure 32: Many portions of the suburban arc will face common issues as they increase community livability and decrease automobile dependency
within municipal boundaries and rapidly developing unincorporated areas within
the urban growth area. These two conditions are discussed separately below.

Within developed incorporated areas, single-family residents will likely be
resistant to change. Even new multifamily or mixed-use development at the
perimeter of residential tracts may be opposed. Therefore, opportunities for
adding intensity, diversity, and even community-based improvements will be
location-specific and generally on commercial or undeveloped sites. At the local
level, better transit, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, local services, and
community cohesiveness can be provided in limited circumstances through
traditional planning and community development tools, such as rezoning, street
and park improvements, and housing programs (see Figure 33).

Recommendations

A regional strategy for transforming suburban areas consists mainly of several
tools discussed in other sections, including:

- **Centers.** Expand the types of centers that receive attention and promote
greater cooperation between nearby centers.

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**Figure 33:** Remodeling auto-oriented suburban communities will take a variety of
innovative approaches, such as the ones illustrated here.
• **Land Use and Transportation Spine Redevelopment.** Include a significant community redevelopment component in major transportation projects, build small centers at transit stations, and consider more comprehensively the strip land use patterns in the region.

• **Green Network.** Connect open space and trail systems through these suburban areas. Even narrow corridors can have a powerful effect on connectivity and neighborhood desirability. Networks of green boulevards, which function equally well for a multiplicity of users, can be an additional way of stitching verdure and greenspaces into the everyday urban experience (Figure 34).

• **Special Facilities.** Schools and other civic facilities and institutions, including places of worship, should be located inside the urban growth area and designed in a manner that fits a more urban context and physically locates these critical facilities in the center of communities.

While the strategy to intensify and diversify the large swath of suburban development into more livable neighborhoods and efficient land use and transportation systems will consist of a number of tools and incremental actions without a regional blueprint or master plan, it is important to articulate it as a distinct strategy because:

• It provides a generalized vision of how this area can improve and emerge over time.

• It provides a set of design tools, such as design guidelines, joint transportation and development projects, and new street improvement models, that will be necessary to successfully achieve local and regional objectives.

• As a regional form, the suburban arc is too large and too important to the region to ignore.

• Walkability and its relationship to human health is particularly a challenge within the suburban arc. Regional programs addressing this objective should be focused there.

• Regional linear systems, such as transportation lines, greenways, and trails, can play an important role in restructuring homogeneous suburban areas.

Structuring urban unincorporated areas within the urban growth area incorporates many of the same tools used for suburban areas within municipalities. However, most important to success in these areas is active collaboration between the applicable county government and the city that will ultimately annex the area. Counties will need to establish standards to direct new development in ways that create walkable, sustainable communities and land use patterns that are sustainable and transit-supportive. In some areas, this may mean more detailed county or city subarea-type planning implemented through urban tools, such as design guidelines, street improvements, and open
space dedication, that benefit not only the individual development but are oriented to the emerging community as well.

**Supporting Policies**
VISION 2040’s draft multicounty planning policies call for accommodating growth first and foremost within the urban growth area, creating vibrant and sustainable community, enhancing existing neighborhoods, and designing schools, institutions and other facilities in keeping with the size and scale of the community.

**Priority Actions**

1. Conduct a collaborative city or county case study to explore measures to develop more viable communities in unincorporated urban areas within the urban growth area. While the intensification and diversification of parts of the suburban arc in developed areas will be an incremental process over time, areas inside the urban growth area perimeter merit immediate attention because they are developing rapidly and the opportunity to create structured communities will soon be lost.

2. Focus neighborhood walkability resources within the suburban arc. Identify new opportunities, techniques, and tools.

*Figure 34: Seattle’s Street Edges Alternatives program is an example of how a residential streetscape improvement can add a sense of place as well as improve water quality in a neighborhood.*
Chapter Five: Implementation Recommendations

The policies proposed by the Puget Sound Regional Design Team are making their way through the PSRC VISION 2040 adoption process and will, if adopted, have a significant impact on practices and resources for regional design activities in support of growth management objectives. Additionally, the Design Team recommends a set of actions to implement the program’s principles and strategies. While the Regional Design Strategy is an ongoing and long term effort, the following recommendations represent projects and activities that could reasonably be initiated in the next five to six years. Because regional coordination of design activities is a relatively new practice, many of the recommendations are steps toward more ambitious efforts once a more substantial foundation of information, analysis, conceptual models, policy framework, and funding programs is in place. Of the 14 recommendations:

- Seven recommendations call for studies to better identify the issues and possible design measures.
- Six recommendations begin with comprehensive region-wide planning to coordinate activities and establish priorities for greater effectiveness.
- One recommendation includes advocacy and policy measures to redirect current practices and public activities.

The intent of all of these recommendations is ultimately to produce positive physical changes in the regional landscape, at all scales, which are consistent with VISION 2040 goals. One of the Design Team’s primary findings is that regional design can play a significant role in achieving growth management objectives. Indeed, one could argue that design activities are essential for achieving the livability, ecological viability and economic vitality.

Primary Recommendation: PSRC Regional Design Program

The Design Team’s primary, overarching recommendation is that PSRC establish a Regional Design Program to pursue the majority of the following recommendations. The Regional Design Strategy is primarily about collaboration, and there is a critical need for a regional leader with broad
perspective and long term commitment to initiate regional design efforts.\(^3\) By taking on a leadership role in regional design, PSRC would implicitly further its central mission and substantially support its other activities.

Two primary reasons support the need for a regional leader to take the central role of housing a Regional Design Program:

- At any scale, from local to regional, good design thrives upon good knowledge. Just as successful businesses value up-to-date research, it is essential to support regional design with a strong research and development program. In practice, design is highly mimetic, borrowing from other places or experiences. The most successful designs are carefully adjusted to meet the needs of new places and situations, and these adjustments rely on detailed knowledge and research about how the new place or situation functions. PSRC has received recognition for its history of providing research to support its regional programs, a tradition which should be extended to supporting a Regional Design Program in order to keep the central Puget Sound region at the forefront of regional planning and coordination.

- The Regional Design Team found that no organization currently coordinates regional design efforts. While there are numerous and laudable efforts currently directed at shaping pieces of the regional landscape, they are often focused on a single issue or are geographically limited in scope. Most of the recommendations below require an entity to initiate the given activity. Because of the regional nature of these recommendations, PSRC is the logical initiator, sponsor, or implementer of the activities.

The Design Team suggests that the research focus of a Regional Design Program would include:

- Assessing socio-cultural, spatial-ecological, and multimodal mobility functionality of the region. How well do our places work? This question is the logical place for urban design research to start, and it should be applied: to existing environments, to new developments that are testing selected approaches and design principles, and to theoretical physical urban system models. Regional research can support questions about where to locate new high-quality urban activities or questions about how to determine the best multi-use structures for connecting places to one another.

\(^3\) Green building development and charrettes have recently benefited from successful training programs in Integrated Design Process, which places a high value on interdisciplinary collaboration. This kind of training could also be successful at integrating the design dimensions of the many design processes necessary for a cooperative regional design strategy. Information about Integrated Design Process training was pulled from the following website on June 21, 2007: [http://www.cascadiagbc.org/resources/events-flyers/june-events/CGB_IDP_June28_29.pdf](http://www.cascadiagbc.org/resources/events-flyers/june-events/CGB_IDP_June28_29.pdf)
• Supporting, undertaking, and using research about how people know, use and value the region and its constituent places. This would include information about perception, way finding and navigation, aesthetics and place valuing. The increasing diversity of cultural backgrounds in the region requires that a regional design effort pay close attention to and gather detailed knowledge about how people use space and read the landscape; a regional design effort also requires the discovery of the most appropriate forms for supporting human behavior.

• Researching both a) the spatial and form patterns of places, and b) the complex societal conditions, functions and processes which are supported by the existing configurations of urban space and environment. Regional design research can include exploratory models and reasoning that extends knowledge as a way of looking closely at ideas. Without research and evaluation at the regional level - of the region itself or of conditions within it - efforts to design a better, stronger, more sustainable region will fall short, continuing to rely on adjusting a present array of design solutions to try to fit new, emerging needs.

Additional Recommendations

The following 14 recommendations are organized based on a possible implementation schedule. Two recommendations relate to work on the draft VISION Update and are noted as completed. Others that might be considered over the next three years are identified as "short-term." Actions that would be pursued in the next five-to-six years are identified as "mid-term."

Many of the recommendations that follow complement other proposed actions that have been developed to implement provisions in the draft revised multicounty planning policies. Parallel and complementary actions are noted.

1. **As part of the VISION 2040 process, incorporate policies and actions suggested by the Regional Design team as amended and incorporated by the Staff Committee and Policy Board.** (completed ✓)

   Through a series of work sessions in 2006, the Regional Design Team developed a number of multicounty planning policies and related actions and transmitted them to PSRC's Regional Staff Committee and Growth Management Policy Board for consideration. These policies and actions comprise a broad spectrum of directions related to the use of design measures and activities to support ecological restoration, integration of land use and transportation, the creation of walkable, livable and efficient communities, and the protection of rural and resource lands. The majority of these recommendations have been incorporated into the draft VISION 2040.
2. **As part of refining the preferred growth alternative for the VISION, identify developmental threats to rural and resource lands.** (completed ✓)

At the summer 2006 work sessions, the Regional Design Team schematically identified areas that appear to be especially susceptible to urban encroachment, so the SEPA analysis could assess impacts in these areas and target possible mitigation measures. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) addressed these concerns – which are carried forward into the Supplemental DEIS.

3. **Prepare guidance materials to assist local governments in developing centers, including distinct concepts for different types of centers.** (short-term – complements other actions calling for study and evaluation of centers, as well as development of a common framework for identifying centers)

The PSRC has already completed several products to help guide centers development. The Council should work with partner agencies and institutions to develop additional guidance for centers. (The Compendium of Regional Design Concepts, Tools, Models and Examples included in the Regional Design Strategy already contributes to this effort.)

4. **Conduct a study to identify the benefits of facilitated subregional planning which coordinates development in proximate urban centers and other development nodes.** (short-term – could be integrated with previous recommendation)

The results of such coordination might bear substantial savings and benefits in terms of transportation access, land use efficiency, service and amenity provision and a greater spectrum of development opportunities.

5. **Initiate a program to plan selected areas around primary transit centers and station areas.** (short-term – complements an action to explore land use and planning practices that promote increasing mode split for multimodal travel – especially for centers)

Such a program would be a cooperative effort between PSRC and one or more transit agency. It could be modeled after station area planning undertaken by Sound Transit relating to light rail development or King County Metro park-and-ride mixed use development projects.

6. **Conduct a study identifying useful planning and design tools to protect rural and resource lands from development.** (short-term – relates to action calling for development of a regional strategy for transfer of development rights and other innovative techniques to protect rural and resource lands from overdevelopment)
PSRC would collaborate with the counties and cities, state agencies, and others on this effort.

7. **Initiate an effort to direct transportation improvement projects to include community redevelopment funding.** (short-term – complements actions to prioritize funding for centers)

   This would be a more pro-active approach to mitigation and a way to leverage the transportation projects to encourage development that supports adopted public policy for focusing growth in centers and compact urban communities, while increasing the use of transit and nonmotorized transportation.

8. **Building on PSRC’s regional trail planning, undertake a comprehensive non-motorized plan.** (short-term – relates to action calling for PSRC to work with members and other groups to establish a safe and efficient regional nonmotorized network)

   Incorporate design measures to facilitate connections and usability. Establish an aggressive implementation program with priorities for funding that focus on most pressing needs. Identify funding sources and consider regional funding of such a program, combining funds from several sources. PSRC would collaborate with WSDOT, transit agencies, and local governments.

9. **Develop a regional open space plan integrating current open space, environmental, and comprehensive planning activities.** (mid-term, parallels action calling for development of a regional greenspace strategy)

   This plan should focus on a network of open spaces and environmental systems and incorporate a wide variety of design and implementation measures including ecological restoration, purchase or transfer of property rights, street improvements, trails, regulatory measures and incorporation of open space in new development. There are several governments and institutions currently working on this topic. Their efforts should be combined under a larger effort. PSRC should initiate discussions regarding how this cooperative effort should be organized. Part of this plan should be an implementation strategy that identifies funding. Consider establishing a regional funding mechanism, if you will, create a "Regional Open Space Investment District" (ROSID)

10. **Conduct a study to forecast the amount, type, and location of industrial lands needed in the short- and long-term future, especially water-dependent industrial sites.** (mid-term – relates to action calling for PSRC to update its inventory of industrial lands and to develop a region-wide strategy for industrial lands)
It would also be a great benefit to various agencies and private interests involved in land use and economic development at both the regional and local levels. Such a study could identify areas where industry should grow, as well as identify brownfield sites that could be redeveloped for non-industrial use.

11. **Conduct a collaborative city and county case study to explore measures to develop more viable communities in unincorporated urban areas within the UGA.** (mid-term – relates to action calling for countywide planning bodies to develop approaches to reconcile different standards for development and infrastructure in urban unincorporated areas)

   *Urban unincorporated areas merit attention because incremental development threatens the opportunity to create orderly and cohesive communities. The study might also be modeled after PSRC’s Rural Town Centers and Corridors project which first examined the conditions and opportunities in representative areas, then identified policy changes, tools and implementation measures to address the issue, and then conducted a case study and framed policy recommendations on the results.*

12. **Conduct a case study of redevelopment sites, especially along transportation arterials.** (mid-term – relates to an action calling for countywide growth management planning groups to develop strategies for brownfield clean-up, as well as to an additional action directed at local jurisdictions to identify underused lands for future redevelopment or reuse)

   *The purpose of this study would be to identify ways to overcome the challenges posed by small lot redevelopment on major arterials, especially those with multi-modal transportation and wider rights of way. This effort might include the study of more assertive public redevelopment efforts, such as a public development authority for a specific corridor or set of corridors and the option of urban renewal actions along appropriate highway sections.*

13. **Building on the case study of small site redevelopment, conduct a corridor plan for an entire arterial section that incorporates redevelopment and design measures.** (mid-term – could be integrated with previous recommendation)

   *The corridor plan should include multi-jurisdictional measures to create a visually attractive corridor that provides a suitable setting for positive community development. An ultimate goal of this effort is a program to facilitate positive corridor redevelopment. PSRC’s Rural Town Centers and Corridors project offers a model of how this might be organized as an inquiry into the special challenges along urban highways and arterials.*
14. **Conduct a pilot study for an estuary or floodplain restoration and redevelopment plan to test the application of new methods and collaborated redevelopment efforts.** (mid-term – could be integrated with previous two recommendations)

   *This pilot study might be jointly developed by local port districts, municipalities and PSRC.*
Appendix A

Process

This Regional Design Strategy is based on previous efforts. During the winter and spring of 2005, Dennis Ryan and John Owen led a class of students at the University of Washington College of Architecture and Urban Planning that explored the use of urban design practices to achieve regional planning and growth management objectives. The students conducted a set of workshops with design and planning professionals and prepared a brief report of their work. Through this effort, the students found that there is indeed a useful role for urban design, and that a set of design related concepts, strategies, policies and implementation tools could substantially support growth management efforts in the central Puget Sound region. Building on this work, Michael Hintze wrote his masters thesis on the role of urban design in regional planning, presenting the historical importance of design in regional planning theory and practice. The class work was presented at a Washington Chapter American Planning Association 2005 conference where it received positive attention.

To pursue these ideas further, John Owen, Dennis Ryan and Bill Trimm approached Rocky Piro at the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) with a proposal to put together a more extensive Regional Design Strategy (RDS) which could provide design support for VISION 2040. They proposed that the effort be conducted by a group of volunteers called the Puget Sound Regional Design Team. The Design Team itself would consist of a steering committee, urban design professionals, and interested parties participating in a series of work sessions and other volunteer efforts. PSRC staff agreed to explore this idea and pursue a grant that would fund management of the project. Rocky Piro was named the PSRC staff contact and became a leader in the Design Team.

A grant from CTED

In July 2006, the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) awarded a grant to the Design Team for 2006 through 2007. Money was granted, through PSRC as the fiscal agent, for two purposes. The first, create a Regional Design Strategy that would link urban design to regional long range planning in a way that would be useful to other regions and communities throughout Washington State. The second charge was to help PSRC by providing them with design assistance during the development of VISION 2040.
Immediately upon receiving the grant, the four core members of the Design Team hired an intern to manage the process and expanded the steering committee to include the following members:

- Lyle Bicknell, City Design, Seattle Department of Planning & Development
- Michael Hintze, AHBL
- John Owen, MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design
- Rocky Piro, Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council
- Dennis Ryan, Professor of Urban Design and Planning, University of Washington
- Bill Trimm, Planning Director, City of Mill Creek
- Ron Turner, Retired Architect, Planner and University Teacher
- Roger Wagoner, BHC Consultants, LLC

Working as an expanded steering committee allowed more people to become closely involved with the project. This larger group contributed a wider variety of perspectives and by working together, they have modeled the kinds of collaborative processes that the regional design strategy ultimately seeks to foster. Meeting on a nearly weekly basis, the steering committee has envisioned the final product, increased the outreach lists, planned and facilitated numerous Design Team workshops, helped synthesize and summarize the ideas that came from those workshops, contributed numerous perspectives and narrations towards the final product, written and edited multi county planning policies, and discussed strategies for presenting policies to PSRC’s regional staff committee and policy boards.

**Three Workshops: Summer 2006**

*July 26, 2006*

The first half-day workshop of the summer was structured to increase awareness of the Regional Design Strategy within the professional urban design community and also provide participants with a way to respond to the VISION 2040 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) before the public comment period ended on July 31. Approximately 150 people were invited; the outreach list was collectively created by members of the steering committee. Workshop participants were sent a package of background materials that provided both an introduction to the intended efforts of the Puget Sound Design Team and an overview of the VISION 2040 DEIS. Over 30 people attended the event hosted at PSRC. PSRC staff presented an overview of VISION 2040 and the DEIS. In two smaller facilitated groups, participants were asked to identify some physicals issues that would be important in the region over the next 30 years. They were also asked to respond to VISION 2040, particularly to the hierarchy of regional geographies identified in the DEIS.
This event was successful at engaging the participants in thinking about design issues on a regional scale. The two small groups generated many ideas of what kinds of physical concepts needed to be addressed regionally over the next 30 years, sketching graphic representations of their ideas and posting them on the wall. They were also primarily concerned that the PSRC hierarchy of regional geographies would interfere with a more holistic notion of a regional-scale systems approach. These ideas were collected and summarized into a letter that was transmitted to PSRC on July 30th.

August 10, 2006
The Design Team Steering Committee organized and conducted a second half-day work session to develop regional design policies and actions. To prepare for the event, the Steering Committee examined the VISION DEIS and results from the July event to generate a number of draft policies. These draft policies were intended to give workshop participants a loose policy basis to start the discussion; questions accompanied each set of proposed policies to aid the discussion. The same outreach list was contacted and invited, and approximately 10 people attended this event. PSRC Staff was on hand during this meeting to assist with policy language where needed, but in the end, participants were more focused on generating ideas for a complete policy package for regional design, rather than responding to previously generated PSRC multicounty planning policies. These policies were combined with the results of the September workshop and compiled into draft design policy working paper. This working paper was formatted so policies might fit more easily within the larger set of VISION 2040 policies; the paper was presented to the PSRC Regional Staff Committee (a committee of planners from various jurisdictions from throughout the region). The response from the Regional Staff Committee was encouraging: they reviewed the design team’s working paper and included some of the design related policies in their own policy package that they recommended to the elected officials on November 9, 2006. A number of the language and intent of the Design Team’s design related multicounty planning policies have been incorporated into PSRC’s “VISION Update: Draft Revised Multicounty Planning Policies.”

September 15, 2006
On September 15, the Design Team Steering Committee organized a full-day event to develop more comprehensive concepts and graphic images for structuring a regional design strategy. The approximately 30 participants were asked to self select into one of 5 groups: Linear Elements, Design a Region, Visual Character, Regional Ecology and Edge Conditions. The steering committee chose these categories based on a summary of key components of the design-related multicounty planning policy document. Participants in each of these smaller groups were given a series of questions, the multicounty planning policies related to the group topic, a variety of helpful 24x36 maps all at the same

scale (generated by PSRC, many of which were presented in the DEIS
document), and tracing paper, markers, and other drafting implements. The
groups were asked to respond to the questions by generating drawings and
graphics (using the maps for guidance, information, and ideas on regional-scale
spatial relationships). Many of the questions focused the groups towards
generating prioritized lists of geographically specific transformational strategies,
while other questions asked the group to brainstorm about overarching principles
that could guide regional design strategies in a more general sense (potentially
applicable to other regions). The five categories were deliberately designed to
overlap with one another, allowing for the possibility that many people would
discuss similar subjects. Each group was facilitated by a member of the steering
committee.

Participants were allowed the freedom move among groups, and the groups
presented their results to everyone else halfway through (to allow for cross-
pollination of thoughts and ideas). The smaller groups then went back to their
topics with fresh ideas and completed their work. The graphics were posted on
the walls for one final large group discussion and presentation before the
workshop was officially adjourned. The results of this highly energetic and
successful workshop were used to re-structure the multicounty planning policy
document (from the August workshop), to generate one poster that could
summarize all of the geographically specific strategies, and to bring together
notions of overarching themes in regional design (these would eventually
become the Principles in the Regional Design Strategy). The work from this
workshop helped shape the packet of draft design-related policies that was
presented to the Regional Staff Committee in October.

October 4-6, 2006: Yakima APA Conference

An initial poster for the Regional Design Strategy was presented at the
Washington Chapter American Planning Association Conference in Yakima on
October 4-6, 2006. The poster, showing a map of proposed transformational
strategies, was well received at the conference and served as a good piece from
which to generate many discussions on regional design issues.

Interim Report and Outreach

From September through the end of 2006, the Design Team has worked closely
with PSRC staff and policy committees to incorporate key design-related policy
language into the multicounty planning policies which were presented to the
elected officials at the beginning of November.

The Design Team Steering Committee, with input and assistance from University
of Washington students and other Design Team members, refined the results
from all three work sessions and incorporated recommendations from the PSRC
staff and PSRC Regional Staff Committee into an interim report.
This interim report provided the basis for a presentation of the “project so far” at three events:

- Washington Chapter APA Brown Bag, February 14, 2007
- Forum on Regional Identity and Character, Design Team event, March 2, 2007
- Urban Affairs Association 37th Annual Meeting, April 28, 2007

Washington Chapter APA Brown Bag, February 14, 2007

By February of 2007, the Steering Committee had produced a 25 page interim report summary. This summary was the basis for a presentation of the Design Team’s accomplishments to date at a Washington APA Brown Bag. This also provided an opportunity for members of the Steering Committee to form a panel to guide a question and answer discussion with the Brown Bag participants. The event was well attended and well received, eliciting a number specific detailed recommendations and suggestions from the participating audience.

Forum on Regional Identity and Character: Design Team event, March 2, 2007

One of the major obstacles to finalizing the initial draft of the complete Regional Design Strategy was the issue of regional identity and visual character. Discussions during every workshop recognized that the final product would need to explore the larger question of regional values and regional identity. Each workshop produced extensive lists of regional characteristics that make the central Puget Sound region distinct.

The Steering Committee members were divided on how to treat the issue of regional identity, but they did agree to host a final outreach event to once again include a larger urban design professional community, hosting a Forum on Regional Identity on March 2, 2007. About 40 participants attended and were split into smaller groups with members of the Steering Committee facilitating and recording for each group. Participants were asked to discuss both the broad strokes and the pertinent details of regional character in the central Puget Sound region. The discussions were lively and varied and produced lists of many cherished characteristics in the Puget Sound area as well as ways in which those characteristics might be passed forward and enhanced in a time of rapid growth.

Urban Affairs Association 37th Annual Meeting, April 28, 2007

The Design Team again had an opportunity to present the Regional Design Strategy at the Urban Affairs Association 37th Annual Meeting at the Westin Hotel in Seattle. Also participating on the panel was Dr. David Prosperi from Florida Atlantic University, who presented the results of an academic study of metropolitan morphology. He describes the necessity of a multi scalar and
spatial analysis of metropolitan form, as opposed to non-spatial ways of thinking about regional economics or ecology. He also defines urban design as a form, neither good nor bad, that exists now as the result of a process. Prosperi’s work seemed to corroborate well with the prescriptions of the Regional Design Strategy, and in any case presents a future source for academic ties to the project. Dr. Prosperi is developing his paper with the collaboration of Dr. Anne Vernez-Moudon of the University of Washington.\(^5\)

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Appendix B: Chapter Three Notes

Complete List of Regional Characteristics

The following list was generated by urban design professionals during a series of Puget Sound Regional Design Team workshops and events.

1. Qualities and characteristics we associate with the natural environment:
   - Water surrounds us (proximity to ocean, the Sound, the lakes, the estuaries, the rivers, the rain)
   - Mountains (views of the Olympics, the Cascades, the silhouettes of Mt. Rainier, Mt Baker or Mt. Hood)
   - Trees and plants (the evergreens, the silhouette of evergreens on hilltops and bluffs, blackberries, bull kelp)
   - Salmon
   - Wildlife diversity (orcas & whales, starfish, otters, seabirds, eagles, deer, protected species)
   - Colors (green, gray, brown)
   - Topography (many hills and valleys, particularly north-south orientation)
   - The rare sunny day (secret gift to those who live here)

2. Qualities and characteristics we associate with the built environment:
   - The Space needle and the Seattle skyline (Smith Tower, Columbia Tower)
   - Architectural monuments (the EMP, the Seattle Central Library, The Tacoma Glass Museum)
   - Infrastructure: ferries, north-south freeways, locks, bridges
   - Industrial global contributions (Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks, Weyerhaeuser) and national contributions (microbrews, biotech and hi-technology, music, wood industry)
   - Military influence
   - Tribal influence on space (dichotomy and dialogue, role of tribal lands on regional land use patterns)
   - Emphasis on quality residential neighborhoods (fine grained urban form)
3. Qualities and characteristics we associate with an intersection where natural and built environments overlap:

- Get outside (REI, outdoor sports, recreation, parks that encourage interaction with natural amenities, bike to work, evacuate urban areas on weekends)
- Interact with the wildlife (aquarium, whale watching, explore tidal pools and touch starfish, watch the salmon runs, visit zoos and botanical gardens)
- Respond to the rain (It rains a lot, tourists see the rain first, cozy wooden interiors, covered walkway, the importance of interior lighting, real North westerners don’t own umbrellas)
- Respond to the water and views (preserve views, limited public and private access to water, proximity to natural amenities increases property value)
- Agriculture
- Fishing industry
- The water-based ports and industrial areas
- Salmon culture (in festivals, in restaurants, as activists)
- Seismic and Flooding hazards (impact on built environment and development)
- Increasing interest in both growing and consuming local and organic foods and products
- Green Building increasingly desired
- Connections among these natural environments (Burke Gillman trail, Mountains to Sound Greenway, Interurban Trail) and historical environments (historic or heritage routes and trails)

4. Qualities and characteristics we associate with the social structures, the processes, and the organization of with this place; i.e. the way we think about things and the way we get things done

- Growth Management (Urban Growth Areas, Comprehensive Plans)
Activism is important (many grassroots movements, importance of neighborhoods within cities)

Grand plans and strong leadership are lacking, but high profile market individuals are not (Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Howard Schultz)

Dynamic information and technology-oriented economy and creative class (cosmopolitan, outward and forward looking, high quality of life attracts people to move here and stay here).

The Seattle Process (political action takes a long time, even outside of Seattle itself)

Seattle-centrism (results, both positive and negative, of tension between one major city and its surrounding metropolitan and rural areas)

Cultural diversity with a public goal of inclusionary society

Current tax policy is driving internal competition within the region

Imitation and use of local examples (one Hot Spot competing with another for vitality)

Community that sustains dynamic arts and culture (high arts such as symphony, ballet and theater, but also underground musical vibrancy and glorious past, literary community)

An informal atmosphere (polar fleece and jeans to work)

The scale of the physical features feels impressive

Vestiges of original platting of small lots and tight streets on hillsides and early settlement and development patterns

Strong culture of youth

Highly educated population

5. Qualities and characteristics we associate with the history of this place:

- Extraction (Logging, Mining)
- Settlement clustered near and interacted with water (water as transportation)
- Both borrowing from and ignoring native cultural precursors to occidental culture (locks, salmon festivals, fishing, ignorance of prior uses of landscape)
- Volatile boom and bust economic cycles
- Rapid post-war expansion: most of the communities already existed, and they expanded outwards and grew together; some retained their historical core while others did not (opposed to California, expansion put new built environment where nothing had been before)
- Historic districts and cultural landscapes
- Agricultural roots
- Denny Hill sluicing (total willingness to reshape the land)
- Center for new immigration and addition of new cultures

**Multicounty Planning Policies Relevant to Discussion of Regional Character**

The following lists of policies correspond to the Summary of Multicounty Planning Policies under each of the five subcategory headings in Chapter 3. The wording and numbering of these policies has been taken from the *Draft Revised Multicounty Planning Policies* as acted on at the March 22nd Executive Board Meeting. (accessible through the following link: [http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/policies/mmp_draft_rev0307.pdf](http://www.psrc.org/projects/vision/policies/mmp_draft_rev0307.pdf)).

1. Natural Environment

**SUMMARY:** VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty planning policies which describe the protection and enhancement of: air and water quality, open space, natural resources, critical areas, native vegetation, freshwater and marine shorelines, watersheds, and the long-term integrity of the natural environment.

- MPP-En-3 Maintain and, where possible, improve air and water quality, soils, and natural systems to ensure the health and wellbeing of people, animals, and plants. Reduce the impacts of transportation on air quality and climate change.
- MPP-En-8 Identify, preserve, and enhance significant regional open space networks and linkages across jurisdictional boundaries.
- MPP-En-9 Designate, protect and enhance significant open spaces, natural resources, and critical areas through the review and comment of countywide planning policies and local plans and provisions.
- MPP-En-12 Preserve and restore native vegetation to protect habitat, especially where vegetation contributes to the overall ecological function.
- MPP-En-14 Maintain natural hydrological functions within the region's ecosystems and watersheds and where feasible, restore them to a more natural state.
- MPP-En-15 Restore -where appropriate and possible - the region’s freshwater and marine shorelines, watersheds, and estuaries to a natural condition for ecological function and value.
- MPP-DP-1 Protect and enhance significant open spaces, natural resources, and critical areas.
- MPP-DP-2 Establish best management practices that protect the long-term integrity of the natural environment, adjacent land uses, and, the long-term productivity of resource lands.
- MPP-DP-3 Support the sustainability of designated resource lands.
- MPP-DP-50 Identify, protect and enhance those elements and characteristics that give the central Puget Sound region its identity, especially the natural visual resources and positive urban form elements.
2. Built Environment

SUMMARY: VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty planning policies that focus on the continued development of regional growth centers and compact urban communities. The policies seek to improve or transform underutilized lands, local street patterns, and linear systems. The policies place a high value on sense of place, housing choice, diversity, quality public spaces, urban design, historic preservation, arts, visual and cultural resources and the protection of both manufacturing-industrial centers and military lands from the encroachment of adjacent incompatible use.

- MPP-EC-15 Utilize urban design strategies and approaches to ensure that changes to the built environment preserve and enhance our region's unique attributes and each community's distinctive identity in recognition of the economic value of sense of place.
- MPP-EC-16 Concentrate a significant amount of economic growth in designated centers and connect them to each other in order to strengthen the region's economy and communities and to promote economic opportunity.
- MPP-EC-17 Maximize the use of existing designated manufacturing and industrial centers by focusing appropriate types and amounts of employment growth in these areas and by protecting them from incompatible adjacent uses.
- MPP-DP-9 Focus a significant share of population and employment growth in designated regional growth centers.
- MPP-DP-14 Give funding priority – both for transportation infrastructure and for economic development – to designated regional manufacturing and industrial centers consistent with the regional vision, including regional, county-level, and local funding.
- MPP-DP-18 Preserve and enhance existing neighborhoods and create vibrant sustainable compact urban communities that provide diverse choices in housing types; a high degree of connectivity in the street network to accommodate encourage walking, bicycling and transit use, and sufficient public spaces.
- MPP-DP-19 Support the transformation of key underutilized lands to higher-density mixed-use areas to complement the development of centers and the enhancement of existing neighborhoods.
- MPP-DP-32 Achieve and sustain through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development – an adequate supply of low-income, moderate-income and special needs housing that is equitably and rationally distributed through the region.
- MPP-DP-37 Develop and provide a range of housing choices across the region in a manner that promotes accessibility to jobs and provides opportunities to live in proximity to work.
- MPP-DP-41 Develop and implement design guidelines to encourage construction of healthy buildings and facilities to promote healthy people.
- MPP-DP-47 Protect military lands from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- MPP-DP-51 Preserve significant regional historic, visual and cultural resources including views, landmarks, archaeological sites, historic and cultural landscapes and areas of special character.
- MPP-DP-52 Develop high-quality, compact urban communities throughout the region's urban growth area that impart a sense of place, preserve local character, provide for mixed uses and choices in housing types, and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit use.
• MPP-DP-53 Provide a wide range of building and community types to serve the needs of a diverse population.

• MPP-DP-54 Support urban design, historic preservation, and arts to (a) enhance quality of life, (b) improve the natural and human-made environment, (c) promote health and wellbeing, (d) contribute to a prosperous economy and (e) increase the region’s resiliency in adapting to changes or adverse events.

• MPP-DP-55 Design public buildings and spaces that contribute to a sense of community and a sense of place.

• MPP-DP-56 Identify opportunities to create parks, civic places and public spaces, especially in or adjacent to centers.

• MPP-DP-59 Address design and community development issues related to important linear systems – such as linear land use patterns, natural systems, transportation and infrastructure systems and edges between differing land uses – with special attention to those linear systems that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

• MPP-T-12 Improve local street patterns – including their design and how they are used – for walking, bicycling, and transit use to enhance communities, connectivity and physical activity.

• MPP-T-18 Design transportation facilities to fit within the context of the built or natural environments in which they are located.

• MPP-T-19 Apply urban design principles in transportation programs and projects for regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas

3. Intersection of built and natural environments

SUMMARY: VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty planning policies which support agriculture and forestry, walking and bicycling, food systems, regional identity, natural boundaries, rural and natural resource areas, environmentally sensitive land use management and development practices, public health, and the region’s role in international economy.

• MPP-DP-25 Contribute to improved ecological functions and more appropriate use of rural lands by minimizing impacts through innovative and environmentally sensitive land use management and development practices.

• MPP-DP-30 Support long-term solutions for the environmental and economic sustainability of agriculture and forestry within rural areas.

• MPP-DP-38 Design communities to provide an improved environment for walking and bicycling.

• MPP-DP-42 Support agricultural, farmland, and aquatic uses that enhance the food system in the central Puget Sound region and its capacity to produce fresh and minimally processed foods.

• MPP-DP-50 Identify, protect and enhance those elements and characteristics that give the central Puget Sound region its identity, especially the natural visual resources and positive urban form elements.

• MPP-DP-58 Allow natural boundaries to help determine the routes and placement of infrastructure connections and improvements.

• MPP-DP-59 Address design and community development issues related to important linear systems – such as linear land use patterns, natural systems,
transportation and infrastructure systems and edges between differing land uses –
with special attention to those linear systems that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

- **MPP-EC-13** Support the contributions of the region's culturally and ethnically
diverse communities in helping the region continue to expand its international
economy.

- **MPP-EC-20** Support economic activity in rural and natural resource areas at a
size and scale that is compatible with the long-term integrity and productivity of
these lands.

- **MPP-PS-1** Protect and enhance the environment and public health and safety
when providing services and facilities.

4. The social structures and organization (the way things work)

SUMMARY: VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty planning policies which
address the ways in which schools, rural areas, regional capital facilities support
the regional vision. The policies favor transit-supportive densities, a diversity of
family-wage jobs, innovative planning techniques to keep growth within urban
boundaries, community development as components of transportation projects,
and targeted economic opportunities in distressed areas. The policies
encourage high performance, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly
development standards.

- **MPP-PS-5** Encourage the design of public facilities and utilities in rural areas to
be at a size and scale appropriate to rural locations, so as not to increase
development pressure.

- **MPP-PS-21** Site schools, institutions, and other community facilities that primarily
serve urban populations within the urban growth area in locations where they will
promote the local desired growth plans.

- **MPP-PS-22** Locate schools, institutions and other community facilities serving
rural residents in neighboring cities and towns and design these facilities in
keeping with the size and scale of the local community.

- **MPP-PS-23** Site or expand regional capital facilities in a manner that (1) reduces
adverse social, environmental and economic impacts on the host community; (2)
equitably balances the location of new facilities; and (3) addresses regional
planning objectives.

- **MPP-PS-24** Do not locate regional capital facilities outside the designated urban
growth area unless it is demonstrated that a non-urban site is the most
appropriate location for such a facility.

- **MPP-T-22** Do not increase roadway capacity through rural areas, unless (1)
commitments to access management have been made, and (2) appropriate
zoning is in place to prevent unplanned growth.

- **MPP-T-24** Target transportation investments into areas that have or are planning
for transit-supportive densities and land uses.

- **MPP-T-28** Promote transportation financing methods that sustain investment and
reflect the costs imposed by users.

- **MPP-EC-7** Encourage all businesses to incorporate environmental and social
responsibility into their practices.
• MPP-EC-8 Promote economic activity and employment growth that creates widely shared prosperity and sustains a diversity of family-wage jobs for the region’s residents.

• MPP-EC-12 Foster appropriate and targeted economic growth in distressed areas to create economic opportunity for residents of these areas.

• MPP-EC-13 Support the contributions of the region’s culturally and ethnically diverse communities in helping the region continue to expand its international economy.

• MPP-EC-14 Ensure that economic development sustains and respects the region’s environmental quality.

• MPP-DP-32 Achieve and sustain - through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development – an adequate supply of low-income, moderate-income and special needs housing that is equitably and rationally distributed through the region.

• MPP-DP-34 Encourage inter-jurisdictional cooperative efforts and public-private partnerships to advance the provision of affordable and special needs housing.

• MPP-DP-35 Expand the supply and range of housing, including affordable units, in centers throughout the region

• MPP-DP-38 Design communities to provide an improved environment for walking and bicycling.

• MPP-DP-43 Encourage the use of innovative techniques, including the transfer of development rights and the purchase of development rights, to provide mechanisms for focusing growth within the urban growth area (especially cities), to lessen pressures to convert rural and resource areas to more intense urban-type development, and to sustain rural and resource-based uses.

• MPP-DP-44 Support and provide incentives for increasing percentages of new development and redevelopment –both public and private – to be built at higher performance, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly standards.

• MPP-DP-53 Provide a wide range of building and community types to serve the needs of a diverse population.

• MPP-DP-57 Address issues affecting community development – including opportunities to improve communities, as well as impacts on communities – in the design of transportation projects and other infrastructure projects, recognizing that such facilities should also advance community development.

5. The history of this place

SUMMARY: VISION 2040 includes draft multicounty planning policies which preserve regional historic, visual, and cultural landscapes and support urban design, historic preservation, and the arts.

• MPP-DP-43 Encourage the use of innovative techniques, including the transfer of development rights and the purchase of development rights, to provide mechanisms for focusing growth within the urban growth area (especially cities), to lessen pressures to convert rural and resource areas to more intense urban-type development, and to sustain rural and resource-based uses.

• MPP-DP-44 Support and provide incentives for increasing percentages of new development and redevelopment –both public and private – to be built at higher performance, energy efficient, and environmentally friendly standards.
- MPP-DP-51 Preserve significant regional historic, visual and cultural resources including views, landmarks, archaeological sites, historic and cultural landscapes and areas of special character
- MPP-DP-54 Support urban design, historic preservation, and arts to (a) enhance quality of life, (b) improve the natural and human-made environment, (c) promote health and wellbeing, (d) contribute to a prosperous economy and (e) increase the region’s resiliency in adapting to changes or adverse events
Appendix C: Maps from Strategy Chapter

Portions of the following maps were represented in Chapter Four to illustrate each of the geographically specific strategies, and Figure 35 shows a compilation of all six of the strategies. The full maps are represented in this Appendix. Note that all of these maps are conceptual and do not necessarily accurately indicate the location or extent of features shown. For example, the brown strips indicating where priority should be given to protect threatened rural areas in Figure 40 are not based on the extensive analysis that would be required to map such areas. Additionally, the colors do not imply that the strategy would be directed to the whole area shown. For example, it is not the intent to create open space throughout the green fingers shown on the map in Figure 37. The strategy is to protect, enhance, create and connect open spaces within those fingers, but it is acknowledged that the open spaces would only encompass a modest portion of the land uses within those areas shown in green.

Figure 35: This map compiles the conceptualized geographic extent of all six of the strategies detailed in Chapter Four. All maps in this appendix were digitized by Dara O’Byrne of Makers Architecture.
Figure 36: **Strategy One: Continue the Development of a Hierarchy of Urban Centers.** This map shows the potential spatial groupings of nearby centers.
Figure 37: **Strategy Two: Create a Green Open Space Network.** This map suggests key green corridors that could help coordinate regional efforts to implement a fully articulated green infrastructure and open space network.
Figure 38: Strategy Three: Redevelopment Opportunities – Recycling Existing Urban Areas. This map indicates where land use patterns can benefit from a strategy to break linear monotony into vibrant activity nodes at key intersections and transit station areas.
Figure 39: **Strategy Four: Transform Industrialized Estuaries and Floodplains.** This map indicates areas that are both critical to industrial vitality and ecological restoration.
Figure 40: **Strategy Five – Protect Threatened Rural Areas and Resource Lands.** This map conceptualizes what an effort might look like to identify edges of the urban growth area which experience more pressure to expand than other areas.
**Figure 41: Strategy Six: Restructure Portions of Auto-Oriented Suburban Areas.** This map shows that suburban areas in the region form a great arc around the Puget Sound. Portions of this arc can benefit from a strategy that facilitates coordination and information sharing as many local jurisdictions face common issues in the process of promoting livable communities and reducing automobile dependency.
Appendix D: Compendium Examples

This Appendix provides an initial Regional Design Compendium. It is intended to serve as a compelling and easy to use supplement that translates between the regional scale values, policies, and principles (discussed in the Regional Design Strategy and in VISION 2040) and local implementation of design related policies.

The Regional Design Compendium is to be used in tandem Chapter Three of the Strategy, which addresses regional character. The Compendium presents methods, techniques, and examples that describe how to work towards, implement, and achieve design objectives and qualities.

The Compendium has been designed as a piece that can be regularly amended and revised. Adding new material to the Compendium will mean engaging citizens in an iterative and collaborative process. Collaboration with professionals, public agencies, academics and interest organizations throughout the region can be accomplished by teams working on specific issues over a series of three to four articulation events. These will be critical activities for developing broad-scale knowledge of and commitment to regional design.

The Compendium, and the process of expanding it, will engender a sense of regional citizenship while helping identify character-defining features and historic and cultural areas as early steps in local projects. The essential elements in the compendium will draw on knowledge and practices within the region so that the resultant product will be strongly relevant to the region and provide an excellent base from which to build.
Coordination of Urban Center Development at Overlake

The Redmond Town Center-Overlake-Downtown Bellevue spine offers an excellent example of the potential benefits of collaborative urban center planning. Overlake is a linear area situated in both Bellevue and Redmond and located roughly between the two city centers (see Figure 42). The area is currently served by regional transit and includes a variety of institutional, industrial, and commercial land uses, including the Microsoft and Nintendo campuses. Both cities are preparing subarea and neighborhood plans for their portions of the area and both are evaluating different development scenarios. There is a current intergovernmental agreement in place that limits the amount of net new commercial development, and the two cities are coordinating their planning efforts.

The creation of an efficient, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use community at Overlake will be greatly enhanced for several reasons, including:

- Land uses can be organized for maximum efficiency, development feasibility, and community stability.
- Transportation systems, including pedestrian and bicycle routes, cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Balancing jobs and housing will be easier if both jurisdictions are considered.
- Overlake is perceived as one area, so that unifying its character and identity will require a consistent approach.
- There may be benefits from combining infrastructure systems, such as storm water treatment.

Also, special opportunities are occurring in the near term:

- Transit improvements could provide much improved access within the Bellevue-Redmond spine. Sound Transit’s plan for a light rail line through the area may be a decade or so away, but rapid transit buses could link the area in the short term and encourage transit-oriented development that would eventually support light rail. It may be that the east side light rail construction could begin with the Bellevue to Redmond segment as it would connect three vital centers and key regional transit stations.
- Large parcels in the area are in the process of redevelopment, and major employers in the area are expanding.
- Given the burgeoning demand for commercial space, public actions will be needed to ensure that there will be sufficient additional residences to support
a viable neighborhood. Creating a viable residential community will require connecting existing and new neighborhoods in both jurisdictions.

In summary, Overlake has the potential to become an even more powerful economic engine, preserve its own identity, accommodate mixed-use neighborhoods, and functionally link the Bellevue-Redmond corridor. More importantly, it could become the keystone in a type of urban structure not otherwise found in Puget Sound – a multi-nodal corridor that integrates and unifies an emerging sub-regional area. This potential is greatly magnified if collaborative efforts continue and the advantages of this unique type of urban concentration (center) are exploited.

Figure 42: Bellevue-Redmond-Overlake Center
Environmental Element: PSRC VISION 2040

PSRC's VISION 2040 Incorporates a substantial environmental element that the strategy to transform industrialized estuaries will support.

Actions to Improve
Puget Sound’s Ecosystem

Sustainable Forestry
Improve forest practices to protect stream ecology and retain habitat corridors.

Reuse Water
Manage treated wastewater and stormwater run-off and reuse it to augment low stream flows, for irrigation and as groundwater recharge.

Preserve Corridors
Conserve river corridors through better management, conservation easements and land acquisition.

Enhance Critical Areas
Protect and restore wetlands and streams channels. Implement better standards for residential bulkheads, piers, and vegetation conservation.

Water-Dependent Uses
Implement improved standards for marinas and other water-oriented activities.

TDR’s
Implement a Transfer of Development Rights program to build stronger urban centers and protect open spaces.

Replace Diesel Vehicles
Convert diesel buses and public vehicles to less polluting systems to upgrade air quality.

Non-motorized Transportation
Increase bicycle and pedestrian transportation to decrease congestion and air pollution.

Protect Intact Environments
This is often the most effective and highest priority measure.

Conservation Incentives
Provide incentives to retain commercial forestry and farming activities to protect open space and prevent sprawl.

Low-Impact Development
Adopt low-impact development practices to reduce run-off.

Energy Conservation
Conserve energy and develop renewable sources.

Focus Growth
Create mixed-use, multi-modal urban centers to accommodate growth, strengthen the economy and create livable communities.

Clean up Brownfields
Upgrade stormwater management, remediate toxins, remove unnecessary armoring, restore shorelines and increase native vegetation for more ecological functions in industrialized flood planes.

Link Habitat
Preserve greenbelts and habitat corridors.

Restore Shorelines
Restore marine shorelines to provide intact salmonid migration corridors and increase the general health of nearshore habitats.

Transit
Increase transit service to reduce auto dependence.
Water Resource Inventory Areas

The 1998 legislature passed The Watershed Planning Act, which set a framework for developing local solutions to watershed issues on a watershed basis. The purpose of the Act is to develop a more thorough and cooperative method of determining what the current water resource situation is in each Watershed Resource Inventory Area of the state and to provide local citizens with the maximum possible input concerning their goals and objectives for water resource management and development. There are eighteen Watershed Resource Inventory Areas covering the central Puget Sound region, shown in Figure 43.

Watershed Resource Inventory Area 8: Proposed Lake Washington-Cedar-Sammamish Watershed Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan

The Lake Washington-Cedar-Sammamish Watershed (Watershed Resource Inventory Area 8), located in western Washington, is home to three populations of Chinook salmon: Cedar River, North Lake Washington, and Issaquah. Each year, Chinook salmon spawn and rear in the Watershed Resource Inventory Area 8 rivers and streams and use the lakes, rivers, estuary, and nearshore to rear and migrate to the ocean. Development in the watershed for human use has dramatically altered habitat that salmon need to survive. Chinook salmon (known more commonly as king salmon) are in trouble; they are far less abundant now than they were even in recent decades, and all three populations are at high risk of extinction. In 1999, the federal government listed Puget Sound Chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Salmon have historically been, and continue to represent, a vital part of the culture and economy of this watershed. The health of salmon populations is an indicator of overall watershed health. Condition of fish habitat is linked to the quality of the environment and the benefits human inhabitants reap from it.
Concerned about the need to protect and restore habitat for Chinook salmon for future generations, 27 local governments in Watershed Resource Inventory Area 8, including King and Snohomish counties, Seattle, and 24 other cities in those counties, signed an inter-local agreement in 2001 to jointly fund the development of a conservation plan to protect and restore salmon habitat.

The Watershed Resource Inventory Area 8 Steering Committee developed this plan through a multiple stakeholder planning process. The Steering Committee is composed of city and county elected leaders, concerned citizens, scientists, and representatives from business and community groups, water and sewer districts, and state and federal agencies. The Steering Committee’s Proposed WRIA 8 Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan is the result of these collaborative efforts. It is a science-based plan that contains recommendations for prioritized actions to restore and protect salmon habitat and a collaborative approach for implementing these actions over the next ten years. The current plan recommends a comprehensive and detailed treatment program. The plan includes a short list of 170 priority actions and a larger list of 1,200 actions.

Unifying this broad range of actions is a commitment to adaptive management, an approach that emphasizes monitoring conditions and revising the management program as conditions warrant. Actions for the plan were developed in three broad categories:

- **Land use, planning, and infrastructure**: Actions that address habitat-forming processes at a landscape scale and focus on accommodating future growth while minimizing impacts to salmon habitat.

- **Site-specific habitat protection and restoration projects**: Actions that protect or restore a specific area or parcel through acquisition or easement and restoration projects.

- **Public outreach and education**: Actions that support the land use and site-specific actions or educate and encourage behavior that benefits habitat health.

**Implications for Regional Design**

- The Watershed Resource Inventory Area conservation plans identify areas (tiers) where new development will have an especially severe impact on Chinook salmon runs unless successfully mitigated. This should be reviewed during the State Environmental Protection Act and alternative formulation process to determine what the relative impacts to those areas are. Additionally, the plans identify key restoration projects and activities that will enhance salmon survivability and, at the same time, the fundamental aquatic processes on which the regional ecology’s health depends.
Cascade Land Conservancy

Cascade Land Conservancy is an entrepreneurial nonprofit land conservation organization, currently working in King, Kittitas, Pierce, Mason, and Snohomish counties with both public and private sector involvement. Its mission is to protect wild and open space lands to sustain the natural beauty and health of the environment. Utilizing a variety of innovative conservation methods, the Cascade Land Conservancy works to strategically conserve and steward critical landscapes that span our service area—from headwaters to estuaries and foothill forests to urban centers. The Cascade Land Conservancy’s comprehensive Conservation Agenda enables it to assess threats to ecosystems, identify regional conservation opportunities, and conserve and steward these important lands.

The *Cascade Agenda*, a report from the Cascades Dialogues project is a narrative and visual articulation of a landscape vision for the 21st century that captures the best features of our community and region. This strategic plan will guide our actions and influence the region to conserve and care for a landscape that will sustain us for the next century.

Description of the Issue

The region’s population could double during the next century. If current land development trends persist, this will mean a dramatic loss of forest lands, agricultural lands and open space in the region (see Figure 44).

The *Cascade Agenda* addresses the following parameters in its goals and action strategy:

- Amount and productivity of forest land.
- Amount and productivity of rural land.
- Amount and quality of parks and open space.
- Amount and quality of restored and protected stream corridors and shorelines.
- Amount of impervious surface.

Justification of the Issue As a Priority

Through the Cascade Dialogues process, the Cascade Land Conservancy and its partners have found substantial and consistent support for resource and open space protection for ecological, economic, recreational and aesthetic reasons.
Current or Proposed Management Efforts

The Cascade Agenda proposes protecting and restoring significant portions of the region’s resource lands, shorelines and open space. The following are the draft goals which are subject to further research and review.

The Cascade Dialogues team is preparing an ambitious implementation strategy that combines a variety of funding sources to acquire at-risk land, support sustainable land based resource businesses, preserve recreational and natural resource lands and acquire development rights to rural and resource lands through a TDR program. The Cascade Land Conservancy is calculating the fiscal resources and cooperative actions needed to reach the goals listed above and identifying a means to attain them.

Implications for VISION 2040

For the purposes of VISION 2040, the Cascade Agenda’s outreach and public participation program provides evidence that such a conservation agenda has broad public, governmental and agency support and that there is regional interest in conserving the environment, resource lands and open space. The Agenda identifies quantitative figures for achieving environmental goals. While these figures merit review and testing over time, they at least provide a preliminary target that can be discussed and tested through VISION 2040. The goals for various types of land and enhancement measures might be considered in one of the Index based alternatives.

Note: Background material taken from Cascade Land Conservancy website and Cascade Dialogues website. Specific information was taken from the slide show for the April 6 2006 Steering Committee.
Restoration Plans Prepared as Part of Shoreline Master Program Updates

The Department of Ecology administers the Washington State Shoreline Management Act. Local governments prepare shoreline master programs containing policies and regulations to protect and restore the shoreline environment, provide public access, and give priority to uses that are dependent or benefit from a shoreline location.

In 2003 the Department of Ecology adopted new shoreline management guidelines that call for significantly improved environmental protection and enhancement practices. Now, when local governments amend their shoreline master programs, they must conduct a comprehensive environmental characterization of their shorelines and identify measures to protect and restore shoreline ecological processes. This new measure can be an important vehicle for translating watershed objectives and analysis into implementable local regulations because local governments must now show that there will be “no net loss” of ecological functions on a comprehensive basis.

Additionally, as part of a shoreline master program update, Local governments must develop an Environmental Restoration Plan identifying restoration opportunities. These restoration plans must take into account the priorities of the watershed–wide concerns identified in the WRIA plan and other scientific analysis. The restoration plans include policies and recommended actions with an implementation plan of how environmental goals will be achieved.

Implications for Regional Design

Because these restoration plans translate watershed-wide objectives to the local level and identify feasible projects tied to a regulatory program, they will potentially be very useful in identifying those open space lands and restoration projects to be included in open space planning.

Additionally, because the Shoreline Management Act objectives balance environmental protection with provision of water oriented uses, jurisdictions preparing SMP’s will be looking for ways to achieve both appropriate development and ecological restoration. This is an area where design can play a leading part and the sharing of information on this issue will benefit local governments.
The Nature Conservancy Biodiversity Portfolio

“The Nature Conservancy is a leading international, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the diversity on life on Earth. [Its mission is] to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.”

The Nature Conservancy, along with agencies and other partners, is developing products throughout the U.S. and internationally called ecoregional assessments that identify priorities for biodiversity protection based on biological values and conservation suitability in the context of large areas called ecoregions. The Nature Conservancy, along with partners such as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, has developed ecoregional assessments that identify the most important places for biodiversity in the Willamette Valley-Puget Trough-Georgia Basin ecoregion with high conservation value and opportunity. Because higher value areas with fewer human impacts tend to be in less populated places and because of the use of a suitability index (see below), most of these areas in the portfolio are non-urban and located near public lands. Within the ecoregion, The Nature Conservancy set goals for the persistence of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species and natural systems. The result can be summarized in aggregate measures that state the percent of species that have met the prescribed biodiversity goals within portfolio areas in the

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In assessing human impacts in the ecoregion, a suitability index was also developed to find not only the most biologically valuable areas, but those most suitable for conservation. Factors for the suitability index included items such as proximity to urban growth boundaries, density of roads, land use, presence of dams, etc.

The completed report is a first approximation of the high priority places for terrestrial and nearshore marine conservation across the ecoregion. Figure 45 shows a prioritization of the portfolio areas that were identified, according to value and threats for the Puget Sound portion of the ecoregion. The table in Figure 46 summarizes terrestrial systems’ and species’ goal performance for the entire Willamette Valley-Puget Trough-Georgia Basin ecoregion, which includes the Puget Sound area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Percent Meeting Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TERRESTRIAL</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial Systems</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Communities</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial Species</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 46: Percentage of terrestrial species and systems within the portfolio meeting ecological goals*

**Current or Proposed Management Efforts**

This problem is being addressed by The Nature Conservancy through land acquisition, easement and landowner incentive programs, working with other organizations and agencies on common conservation priorities, as well as governmental policy work. The Willamette Valley-Puget Trough-Georgia Basin Assessment also recommends management strategies for those involved in conservation planning:

**Implications for Regional Design**

The Biodiversity Portfolio and associated information will be useful in identifying high priority lands for protection as part of a comprehensive open space plan. The maps themselves present compelling visual images that are useful in public information materials, presentations and consensus building activities. Additionally, the Nature Conservancy has been working on recommendations for urban land and is a great resource for planning and design to protect and enhance the ecology.
Port of Seattle

The Port of Seattle has restored and provided public access at a number of segments along the Duwamish as part of mitigation for development projects (see Figure 47). While these projects were located where opportunities arose and are scattered along the river, together with Seattle Parks and Recreation projects and the development of a pedestrian and bicycle trail with planned connections to the Mountain-to-Sound and Green River Interurban trails, they provide an example of how individual efforts can be coordinated toward a regionally important recreational amenity and environmentally significant restoration along with industrial development (see Figure 48).

![Figure 47: Port of Seattle Duwamish mitigation projects](image1)

![Figure 48: A Port of Seattle habitat restoration project](image2)
The Port has worked with a number of citizen groups to provide habitat and recreational opportunities as part of the Terminal 5 expansion, seen before and after in Figure 49.

Figure 49: Terminal 5

Before
Snohomish Estuary Wetland Integration Plan and Implementing Activities

The 1997 SEWIP is a comprehensive strategy for managing the estuary’s wetlands while accommodating human activities. Recent implementation activities illustrate how larger comprehensive planning can be translated into local implementation measures and on-the-ground improvements. Based on the SEWIP effort, the City of Everett prepared a shoreline master program and a public access plan around the Everett Peninsula that integrates industrial expansion, environmental restoration, and public access (see Figure 50).

The City of Marysville’s vision for a stretch of Ebey’s Slough (part of the Snohomish River estuary) calls for retention of an old mill where logs may be rafted, a boat launch and shallow-draft water recreation area, the restoration of a large salt marsh, and mixed-use development, all linked with a trail system (see Figure 51). Consequently, the City’s new shoreline master program includes specific regulations allowing mixed-use and residential development if public access and substantial shoreline restoration are provided. This approach represents a significant departure from typical shoreline use regulations generally discouraging residential development. But Washington
Department of Ecology agreed with the City’s direction in this case because it will achieve environmental and public access objectives.

In terms of physical restoration improvements, the Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Forum, a voluntary coalition of governments, tribes, special purpose districts, and non-governmental organizations, has been awarded $2.3 million for five projects that will substantially improve the estuary’s ecology (See Figure 52).

Figure 52: Priority habitat restoration projects.
The Shared Strategy is a groundbreaking collaborative effort to protect and restore salmon runs across Puget Sound. Shared Strategy engages local citizens, tribes, technical experts and policy makers from all levels of government to build a practical, cost-effective recovery plan endorsed by the people living and working in the watersheds of Puget Sound, the extent of which is depicted in Figure 53. Shared Strategy works with and builds on existing recovery efforts across the Sound in the belief that local stakeholders are in the best position to find lasting solutions for their communities to complex ecological, economic and cultural challenges. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal agencies responsible for implementing the Endangered Species Act, have endorsed the Shared Strategy and are active participants.

The primary objective of the Shared Strategy is to recover and maintain an abundance of naturally spawning salmon at self-sustaining, harvestable levels.

The ultimate outcome will be recovery of the listed species and improved conditions for the entire ecosystem. They are in the fourth step of a five-step process that began in 2001. The 5-Step Shared Strategy is summarized below:

- Identify what should be in a recovery plan and assess how current efforts can support the plan.
- Set recovery targets and ranges for each watershed.
- Identify actions needed at the watershed level to meet targets.
- Build regional consensus to develop strategies and commitments on cross-watershed issues.
- Finalize and submit the plan and prepare for successful implementation.

Figure 53: Shared Strategy’s map of the Puget Sound Watershed

7 This information was compiled from the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound website: http://www.sharesalmonstrategy.org/index.htm.
As the next significant milestone, local and regional Shared Strategy members are planning to deliver the 14 watershed chapters, a nearshore chapter and regional (cross-watershed) plan elements as a single, comprehensive plan to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on June 30, 2005.

Developing a Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Salmon

The June 2005 plan is a significant step in managing regional salmon recovery. Early indications are that recovery is possible and the region has already started down the path toward achieving it. It appears that the individual watersheds are:

- Identifying the causes of decline and threats to salmon and the needed actions to address them.
- Developing a focused 10-year plan within a long-term recovery context.
- Prioritizing the most important projects to make a difference in the next ten years.
- Linking major actions to improvements for fish.

With the Watershed Resource Inventory Area components, nearshore, and regional (cross-watershed) plan elements, the June 2005 plan identifies the goals, strategies and actions needed to achieve salmon recovery. It will emphasize the key decisions that have been made at this time and where we have the greatest certainty and priority for action. By the end of the year, the final plan will also include implementation commitments for many of the key actions needed to start the region on a recovery path in the next ten years. The plan will clearly identify decisions still underway and the game plan to address issues that are on a longer time frame.

Implications for Regional Design

The shared strategy can provide very useful guidance in identifying open spaces and restoration activities that would benefit aquatic ecosystems.
Puget Sound Regional Design Team:

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Design Workshop Participants (at one or more events)


Linda Abe, EDAW
Jeff Aken, Cascade Land Conservancy
Stephen Antupit, Mithun Partners
Julie Atkins, Federal Transit Administration
Susan Bartlett, KPFF Consulting Engineers
Roald Behee, Community Transit
Rob Berman, KPFF Consulting Engineers
Dan Bertolet, GGLO
Marit Bockelie, City of Kent
Duane Bowman, City of Edmonds
Suzanne Cartwright, ULI/Foster Pepper PLLC
Rob Chave, City of Edmonds
Joan Chen, PSRC
Marty Curry, Curry Consulting
King Cushman, PSRC
Hilary Dahl, UW Student
John Dewhirst, Edmonds Planning Board
Sean Engle, UW Student
Jerry Ernst, Ernst and Associates
Andrew Fenstermacher, UW Student
Jerry Finrow, University of Washington
Ben Frerichs, Economic Consulting Services
Rob Garwood, City of Sammamish
Michael Godfried, NK Architecture
Virginia Gunby, Municipal League of King County
Cliff Hall, WashDOT
Casey Hildreth, UW Student
Cari Hornbein, Director of Planning City of Duvall
Kate Howe, Via Architecture
Kimberly Hunt, Metro King County
Janet Hyde-Wright, Reid Middleton, Inc
Deborah Johnson, City of Lakewood
Davidya Kasperzyk, A NW Collaborative
Sean Keithly, UW Student
Valerie Kinast, City of Renton
Dave Koenig, City of Everett
Ron Leimkuhler, KPFF Consulting Engineers
Chelsea Levy, UW Student, City of Seattle
Robin Mayhew, PSRC
Justin McCaffrey, UW Student
Heather McCartney, City of Mukilteo
Caitlin McKee, UW Student
Dennis Meier, Seattle DPD
Kenichi Nakano, Nakano Associates
Chris O’Claire, Metro King County
Jeff Pavey, Cascade Land Conservancy
Pietro Potesta, Makers Architecture
Janet Rogerson, CTED Growth Management
Guillermo Romano, CityDesign City of Seattle
Ferne Rosenblatt, Okanogan Valley Land Counsel
Jean Shaffer, Snohomish County
Christen Smith Leeson, City of Issaquah
Jim Soules, Cottage Company
Lucy Steers, League of Women Voters
Yorik Stevens-Wajda, PSRC
Paul Stewart, City of Kirkland
Barbara Swift, Swift & Company
Carol Thompson, Community Transit
Clay Veka, UW Student
Julia Walton, AHBL, Inc
Louis Webster, City of Mercer Island
Geoff Wentlandt, City of Bremerton
David Wright, BCRD (Tacoma), Sustainable Ballard
Michael Zelinski, Snohomish County