



Puget Sound Regional Council

Equity Advisory Committee | Remote Only

Date: Thursday, March 3, 2022 from 5:30-7:30 pm

1. Welcome, Roll Call and Icebreaker (5:30) – Co-Chairs

2. Reports

- a. Meeting Summary for February 3, 2022*
- b. EAC Member Report Out

3. Discussion Item (5:45)

- a. Update on the Regional Housing Strategy* – *Laura Benjamin, PSRC*

4. Discussion Item (6:00)

- a. Regional Transportation Plan: Coordinated Mobility Plan* – *Jean Kim, PSRC*

5. Discussion Item (7:00)

- a. Equitable Engagement Guidance for Local Jurisdictions* – *Maggie Moore & Gary Simonson, PSRC*

6. Next meeting: April 7, 2022

7. Adjourn (7:30)

*Supporting materials attached.

Zoom Remote Connection Details

- To join the webinar, please click the following link: <https://psrc-org.zoom.us/j/89680174482?pwd=ZmJrQWNMbXV1NnlkeWtxaVZMZ2htZz09> and enter Passcode: 687637.
- To join by phone, call 877 853 5257 or 888 475 4499 and enter Webinar ID: 896 8017 4482 and Passcode: 687637.
- Sign language and communication material in alternate formats can be arranged given sufficient notice by calling (206) 464-7090 or TTY Relay 711.
- العربية | Arabic, 中文 | Chinese, Deutsch | German, Français | French, 한국어 | Korean, Русский | Russian, Español | Spanish, Tagalog, Tiếng việt | Vietnamese, visit <https://www.psrc.org/contact-center/language-assistance>.



Puget Sound Regional Council

Equity Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Date: February 3, 2022

Location: Remote Only

Presentations from the meeting are available on the PSRC website:

<https://www.psrc.org/eac-meetings>. Audio recording of the meeting is available by request.

Introductions & Welcome

Charles Patton called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. He welcomed everyone and asked Mikayla begin the roll call for attendance, and to identify if anyone was calling in on the phone. During the roll call, members responded to the icebreaker question, “What was an embarrassing fashion trend that you used to wear?”

EAC Co-Chairs

Charles updated the committee that three of the five candidates for the co-chair positions removed themselves from the election. The two co-chairs of the EAC are:

- Chris Stearns (he/him) | King County | City of Auburn
- Shannon Turner (he/him) | Kitsap County | NAACP

These co-chairs will be responsible for facilitating discussions, providing leadership (e.g., representing the committee at various board meetings, when necessary, and meeting preparation (e.g., participating in meeting dry runs).

You can view the presentation [here](#).

Equity Tracker – An Introduction to Engagement with the EAC

Brian Lee and Mary Richards briefed the committee on the Equity Tracker, a tool that will help measure disparities between communities across different parts of people’s lives, track performance over time in closing equity gaps, and publicly hold PSRC and its partners accountable in these efforts. Staff then led a discussion with the Equity Advisory Committee about how best to engage with the group on its development.

You can view the presentation [here](#).

Regional Transportation Plan: Outreach and Equity

Ben Bakkenta and Jean Kim briefed the committee on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and opportunities to engage in the coming months. The plan has been released for a public review and comment period which runs through February 28, 2022, and

board action is scheduled for April. Staff also provided additional details on two components of the plan – outreach activities and the evaluation of equity.

You can view the presentation [here](#).

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Members Represented at the Table

See attached attendance roster.

PSRC Staff and Other Guests Present

Mikayla Svob, PSRC

Charles Patton, PSRC

Liz Underwood-Bultmann, PSRC

Noah Boggess, PSRC

Kelly McGourty, PSRC

Brian Lee, PSRC

Ben Bakkenta, PSRC

Mary Richards, PSRC

Jean Kim, PSRC

Brock Howell

Michelle Zeidman, WSDOT

Marianne Seifert, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

PSRC Equity Advisory Committee - Attendance Roster

[illegible]



Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

March 3, 2022

TO: Equity Advisory Committee

FROM: Laura Benjamin, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Update on the Regional Housing Strategy

IN BRIEF

Following up on December and January briefings on the draft Regional Housing Strategy, PSRC staff will provide an update on how the Executive Board incorporated the committee's feedback into the strategy and next steps in regional housing work.

DISCUSSION

Background

Housing access and affordability are key policy areas in [VISION 2050](#), the region's long-range plan for growth. VISION 2050 calls for the region to better assess and address housing needs through a coordinated regional housing strategy and a regional housing needs assessment.

The Regional Housing Strategy is intended to serve as a "playbook" of regional and local actions that move towards the region's goals of: preserving, improving, and expanding housing; providing a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident; and promoting fair and equal access to housing for all people. More background information on the Regional Housing Strategy is available online at <https://www.psrc.org/regional-housing-strategy>.

EAC Input on the Draft Regional Housing Strategy

To support their review of the recommended strategy, PSRC's Executive Board's asked the EAC for feedback on how racial equity is incorporated in the draft Regional Housing Strategy.

At the Equity Advisory Committee's December 2 meeting the committee was asked if and how they would like to provide feedback on the draft strategy given the timing of the project and the committee's capacity. Committee members were interested in further reviewing the strategy and providing additional feedback. To follow up on this, PSRC staff presented the draft Regional Housing Strategy in greater detail at the January 6

committee meeting and asked committee members to provide feedback on where equity can be strengthened and/or is missing in the draft strategy.

PSRC staff reported feedback from the Equity Advisory Committee to the Executive Board at their January 27 meeting to support review and potential adoption of the strategy. The Executive Board was supportive of incorporating the proposed changes, shown in **text**, in the draft Regional Housing Strategy (Attachment A).

A summary of the feedback shared with the Executive Board and overview of changes to the strategy are listed below.

Overall, many Equity Advisory Committee members expressed support for the draft Regional Housing Strategy, and provided feedback on how equity could be better emphasized. General comments included:

- Appreciation for the RHS and sharing the information about housing.
- It is important that affordable options be available throughout the region and not simply concentrated in one or two neighborhoods.
- Interest in gentrification and displacement and how it can be addressed. Concern that housing development and costs could result in changes to the make-up of a community.
- Concern about cities using historic districts or other zoning overlays to act as barriers to housing and affordable housing.
- Concern about the lack of long-term support from developers and interest in more information and support on preservation and maintenance of housing over time so homes do not go into disrepair.
- Committee members were appreciative of the focus groups held in 2021 and encouraged PSRC to continue to include community groups to provide input.

Several Equity Advisory Committee members noted aspects of the strategy that can be improved to better center racial equity. Areas for improvement and/or equity aspects missing from the draft RHS are listed below.

- **Fair Housing.** Some members want to see investment in infrastructure to track and respond to racial discrimination by landlords.
 - *The Implementation Table has been updated to include federal and state funding to support fair housing efforts.*
- **Planning Support.** Some members called on the need for funding and data to assess impacts of racial disparities and inequities as part of HB 1220 implementation.
 - *The HB 1220 language in the Implementation Table has been expanded to note the need for funding to support local jurisdictions' work to implement HB 1220.*
- **NIMBYism.** Several EAC members would like to see strategies to overcome community opposition to new housing, particularly affordable housing.
 - *The Implementation Table has been updated to include expanded language on community engagement, including groups that have been historically excluded from the planning process.*

- **Housing Near Transit.** At light rail stations, the strategy should prioritize the need to build housing rather than parking garages.
 - *The Supply strategy “Allow for more multi-family housing choices near transit to provide greater access for more people” has been updated to emphasize the need to prioritize land for people and housing rather than land for cars and parking near light rail stations.*
- **Unhoused People.** The strategy should explicitly acknowledge that the lack of affordable housing in the region is a key driver of homelessness, which disproportionately affects people of color.
 - *The introductory narrative now includes additional language on the connection between the lack of affordable housing and an increase in unhoused people, particularly people of color.*
- **Racial Equity.** EAC members appreciate that the RHS says racial equity should be addressed but suggest establishing a goal to achieve racial equity in housing to establish more accountability.
 - *The racial equity acknowledgement at the beginning of strategy can be reworded to connect to agency’s goals for racial equity. The statement has also been reworded to be more action oriented.*
- **Publicly Owned Housing.** Some EAC members expressed support for language promoting publicly owned housing,
 - *Language on publicly owned housing has been updated in the Stability and Subsidy sections of the strategy.*
- **Home Ownership.** Several EAC members would like to see the strategy more explicitly call out alternative ownership options such as community land trusts.
 - *Language on homeownership has been updated in the Implementation Table and the Stability BIPOC homeownership strategy to acknowledge different types of ownership models.*
- **Root Causes of the Housing Crisis.** There was interest in exploring the root causes of housing affordability issues, such as income disparities. It was acknowledged that root cause analysis may go beyond the scope of the RHS.
 - *The draft strategy somewhat acknowledges this in the narrative text that talks about the impact of increased demand for housing in the past decade.*
- **Accountability.** Accountability is important to ensure that there is follow-through and action to implement the strategy. Some EAC members expressed concern that if regional or local strategies are too high-level, some issues could be overlooked or that actions won’t be taken to address specific housing and zoning details. Many EAC members expressed interest in providing guidance on RHS implementation at future committee meetings.
 - *The Implementation Table has been updated to call out the Equity Advisory Committee to support future implementation of the strategy, including accountability and equitable engagement.*
- **EAC Voices in Strategy Document.** Add quotes and/or pictures of EAC member’s specific concerns weaved in throughout the corresponding sections of the housing plan.

- *During the final formatting of the strategy, pictures and quotes may be added to address this comment.*

The Executive Board is expected to adopt the Regional Housing Strategy, including the edits to respond to EAC feedback, at its February 24 meeting.

Next Steps

PSRC staff are interested in including the EAC in the upcoming implementation of the housing work program, where all efforts will be made to engage the committee early in the process and allow time for co-creation of materials, to the degree the committee has capacity and interest in this topic.

Implementation items will be reviewed with the Equity Advisory Committee later this year.

Lead Staff

For more information, contact Laura Benjamin, Senior Planner, at 206-464-7134 or LBenjamin@psrc.org, or Paul Inghram, Director of Growth Management, at 206-464-7549 or PInghram@psrc.org.

Attachment A: Draft Regional Housing Strategy, dated February 2022

Updates to the Draft Regional Housing Strategy – February 2022

Changes to the draft Regional Housing Strategy to respond to EAC feedback are shown below in **blue** text. These changes were shared with the Executive Board at its January meeting and board members expressed support for the changes.

For reference, changes made in response to Executive Board feedback are shown in **text**.

Regional Housing Strategy

The goal of the Regional Housing Strategy is to ensure~~ing~~ that all people have a range of safe and affordable housing choices in order to create a healthy and prosperous future for the region, including eliminating racial disparities in access to housing is essential to creating a healthy and prosperous future for the region.

In the central Puget Sound region, where the housing market is becoming increasingly unaffordable, many residents experience housing instability daily. Many residents in the region are facing an unprecedented challenge in finding and keeping a home that they can afford. Meeting the housing needs of all households at a range of income levels is integral to promoting health and well-being and creating a region that is livable for all residents, economically prosperous, and environmentally sustainable. Housing access and affordability continues to be a major challenge for the region, and limits the region in achieving other mobility, equity, environmental, and economic goals. Meeting the housing needs of all households at a range of income levels is integral to promoting health and well-being and creating a region that is livable for all residents, economically prosperous, and environmentally sustainable.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related economic recession have only exacerbated the housing crisis for many residents, specifically lower income renters who are disproportionately people of color. With the loss of jobs and wages, a record number of lower income renters are unable to pay their rent on-time. While government support, such as eviction moratoria and direct payment support have been essential to keep people housed, these support systems are ending while many households are still unable to pay their rent. Providing long-term affordable housing options across the region is even more crucial now as the region works to recover from the pandemic.

Addressing Racial Inequities in Housing

The central Puget Sound region's housing landscape reflects more than market forces and conditions. It is also the product of decades of public policies and private practices that, throughout the 20th century, often excluded lower-income households, immigrant communities, and people of color from accessing housing and living in certain areas. Practices such as restrictive covenants, redlining, and loan discrimination, limited where people could live based on their race. These actions contributed to patterns of racial segregation still seen today, paired with lower quality of life outcomes such as access to quality education, living wage employment, a healthy environment, and transportation.

Together, past and current housing practices have perpetuated substantial inequities in wealth, ownership, and opportunity, and they continue to create barriers to rectifying these conditions. Black homeownership in the central Puget Sound region fell from 36 percent of households in 2000 to 30 percent today. This trend is steeper than the decline in the national rate for Black homeownership, which has dropped to 42 percent from 46 percent in 2000. Lower Black homeownership rates in our region may be, in part, due to the extreme lack of affordability throughout the region. Disparities in household income – \$57,300 for the typical (or median) Black household compared to \$95,000 for white households¹– contribute to the racial gap in homeownership as well.

The Regional Housing Strategy recognizes this legacy and of the comprehensive work needed to redress it.

¹ 2019 ACS 1-Year PUMS

Housing access and affordability are goals of the state Growth Management Act and key policy areas in VISION 2050, the region's long-range plan for growth. Recognizing that housing access, affordability, and choice are regional issues that do not stop at a jurisdiction's borders, VISION 2050 calls for a coordinated regional housing strategy. In addition to addressing existing gaps and needs, VISION 2050 identifies the need for more housing of all types to meet the needs of the region out to 2050.

Cities and counties throughout the region have a long history of planning for housing. Local comprehensive plans address housing access and affordability. Partnerships, like A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) and Alliance for Housing Affordability (AHA), bring cities together to enact housing ordinances and to fund construction. Cities and counties are adopting new subarea plans for downtowns, town centers, and transit stations to allow for more housing in denser, mixed-use development. Yet, even with the many successes, every community has a continuing and active role to play in meeting the region's housing needs.

Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

Growth Management Act housing goal

This strategy calls out the highest priority goals and actions to best implement VISION 2050 and meet the housing needs of our communities. These strategies will have the greatest impact at the necessary scale. However, actions such as zoning changes, renter protections, and funding often rely on individual local and agency actions that may be challenging to implement. Implementing these actions will require substantial efforts, shared accountability, and may meet resistance. For decades the region has struggled to provide enough housing for a growing population. The region is about two years behind in housing production, with an even greater deficit for affordable housing, and continues to face acute housing challenges. If we are to meet the region's housing needs now and in the future, cities, counties, agencies, coalitions, businesses, and other housing advocates need to begin now to implement these strategies.

What is the Regional Housing Strategy?

The Regional Housing Strategy is a “playbook” of regional and local actions to preserve, improve, and expand housing stock in the region. The aim is to make a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices available to every resident and to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.

The Regional Housing Strategy is intended to:

- Support the Growth Management Act and VISION 2050

- Provide a coordinated, data informed, and ambitious framework to address current and future housing needs for all residents
- Recognize and support the different roles local jurisdictions, agencies, and partners play in preserving and expanding both affordable and market-rate housing
- Inform, complement and advance future housing planning actions at regional, countywide, and local levels
- Center equity and use a racial equity lens to assess disparities, engage residents, and minimize burdens to vulnerable communities

This work began with development of the first region-wide assessment of housing needs. The [Regional Housing Needs Assessment](#) addresses the central question of “What are gaps between current and projected housing needs and housing supply?” The needs assessment analyzed the region’s housing stock and demonstrated how local and subregional housing need and supply fit into the regional picture. Findings from the Regional Housing Needs Assessment underscore that it is increasingly difficult to find and afford a home in the central Puget Sound region, and that these challenges are disproportionately felt by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. More on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment is [available online](#). The Regional Housing Strategy is informed by the findings of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment, Growth Management Policy Board feedback, stakeholder outreach, and discussions among focus groups.

The Regional Housing Strategy will help guide and support upcoming local comprehensive plan updates. By providing data, guidance, and technical assistance, PSRC supports jurisdictions in their efforts to adopt best housing practices and establish coordinated local housing and affordable housing targets. More information about the Regional Housing Strategy and housing resources can be found at psrc.org/housing.

The Regional Housing Strategy is organized around the areas of supply, stability, and subsidy as a way to recognize the multiple facets of housing challenges. As a regional tool, it seeks to identify those strategies that are most important to address through regional and multijurisdictional coordination and those local actions that are essential to the implementation of VISION 2050.

Regional Housing Strategy Goals and Actions

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment underscores that it is increasingly difficult for people living and working in the central Puget Sound region to find housing that is affordable. The affordable housing challenge is not distributed evenly among residents based on income, race, age, or household size, nor is it evenly spread geographically. There are significant, regionwide challenges and disparities in access to housing, with the most vulnerable residents in the region shouldering the burden. With increasing incomes – and a growing gap in incomes – and a surge in demand for housing, the region is experiencing an affordability crisis not seen since World War II. Many middle and lower income households struggle to find housing that fits their income in an increasingly competitive and expensive housing market. As affordable housing options become scarce, households are forced to move farther from their jobs and communities, resulting in increased traffic congestion and fragmentation of communities.

With a projected need for more than 800,000 new housing units and more than a third of households are anticipated to be at moderate- and lower-income levels, VISION 2050 aims to substantially increase the construction of housing and to build more housing that is affordable to more families. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment concluded that about 34% of new housing will need some level of public incentive – ranging from flexible development standards to direct subsidy – to be affordable to households earning less than 80% AMI. In response to this need, the Regional Housing Strategy calls for three areas of action:

Supply: Build more housing of different types

To meet the region's vision for a more livable, prosperous, and equitable future, more housing is needed of different types, costs, and with access to jobs, transit and services.

Stability: Provide opportunities for residents to live in housing that meets their needs

As the region grows and become a more expensive place to live, many households are at a serious threat of being displaced from their communities. More housing options and strategies are needed to help people have the option to stay in their neighborhoods, with an emphasis on lower-income communities and BIPOC communities that have been systemically excluded from homeownership opportunities.

Subsidy: Create and sustain long-term funding sources to create and preserve housing for very low-income households and unhoused residents

At the lowest income levels, the market is not capable of building housing at a cost that is affordable. Eliminating cost burden for households will require a major increase in funding to subsidize housing costs and to build more housing affordable to households earning less than \$50,000 per year.

Supply: Build more housing of different types

The region needs more housing of varied types in all communities. There is already a backlog of about 50,000 units needed to address current housing gaps and the region needs over 800,000 new housing units to accommodate the region's needs through the year 2050. Not keeping up with population growth has exacerbated the upward pressure on housing costs. The region needs to build more housing to address the current backlog and reduce the impact on housing prices and rents.

Although jurisdictions do not typically build housing, zoning and development regulations at the local level play a significant role in whether and how much housing is built as the construction industry responds to growth. Most cities and counties have sufficient zoned capacity for growth in accordance with Buildable Lands reports. Even so, this capacity is not always located near transit stations, schools, jobs, or services, and zoning may not encourage the types of housing that best corresponds to needs or planned infrastructure. While the region is making major investments in transit and ferries, often the zoning near these transit station areas reflects decisions made decades ago. The Supply strategies call for a reexamination of residential zoning to create more places for multifamily and middle density housing and to reform single family zoning to increase flexibility and opportunities.

To reflect these needs and opportunities to improve housing supply, the Regional Housing Strategy calls for:

- Encourage ~~Allow for~~ more multi-family housing choices near transit to provide greater access for more people
 - **Increase the opportunity for moderate and higher density housing** to meet the goal of 65% of residential growth to be located near high-capacity transit stations. This could include increasing the land zoned for multifamily and mixed-use housing and revising multifamily zones to increase heights and densities. Areas near high-capacity transit stations, such as light rail, should be zoned for the highest housing densities [and prioritize housing and people-centered uses over automotive uses whenever possible](#).
- Encourage ~~Allow for~~ more middle density housing to provide greater housing choice for people at all stages of life
 - **Increase zoning that allows for moderate density “missing middle” housing** to increase opportunities for townhomes and multiple units in neighborhoods with infrastructure, services, and amenities. Zoning that supports moderate densities is limited in the region, while these forms of housing have been shown to be less costly than either single-family homes or higher density developments. Moderate density housing can fit well within established neighborhoods and

significantly increasing housing supply and choices for households at 80-120% Area Median Income².

- Encourage ~~Allow for~~ more housing choices within single-family zones to provide greater housing choice and less costly ownership options throughout the region.
 - **Reform single-family zoning** to increase opportunities for small lots, zero-lot line, accessory dwelling units, cottage homes, and of up to six units per lot that serve a wider range of households, including singles, couples, seniors, and smaller families. The vast majority of zoning in the region is for exclusively single-family development, often requiring large lots. Due to the extensive amount of single-family zoning, even modestly increasing housing opportunities in single-family zones can have a significant regional impact in both more and less densely developed places. These modest density increases are critical for places farther from job centers and high capacity transit.
- Reduce the costs to build housing
 - **Increase densities, reduce minimum lot sizes, and reduce or eliminate parking requirements** to make it less costly per unit to build homes. Costs make home ownership increasingly out of reach for families and make development of more affordable housing choices difficult. Allowing increased densities, smaller lots, and reducing or eliminating parking requirements, especially in areas with access to transit and in less auto dependent neighborhoods, has the potential to significantly reduce the per unit costs of constructing housing.
 - **Increase development predictability** through cross-jurisdiction coordination and multi-jurisdiction housing organizations that works to increase regulatory consistency and reduce complexity. Developers report that varying regulations in jurisdictions across the region results in complexity and greater costs for housing.
 - **Invest in education for trades people and new building technologies.** A key contributor to housing costs are labor and materials. Supporting a healthy work force to build housing is critical to ensuring supply can keep up with demand.

² More on Area Median Income and other commonly used housing terms is [available online](#).

Stability: Provide opportunities for residents to live in housing that meets their needs

The rising cost of housing threatens the ability of people to remain in their communities. The housing market has experienced great highs and lows that have benefitted some and created and exacerbated hardship and inequalities for others. There are substantial disparities in housing access between white and person of color households, underscoring the ongoing effects of systemic racism in housing. People of color, on average, have lower incomes, are more likely to rent, and are more likely to be cost burdened than white households. White residents are more likely to own their own home than Black residents across all income levels.

Following the precipitous drop in housing prices and foreclosures of the 2008 recession, the region's economic upswing and strong job growth in the 2010s fueled dramatic increases in rents and home prices. Despite job losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting financial impact on many households, home prices have continued to increase in the region. Some may have been able to take advantage of historically low mortgage interest rates or lower rents, while others are in a challenging position due to loss of income and face the potential of eviction or foreclosure. An imbalanced recovery may further the threat of displacement of low-income households, people of color, and seniors on fixed incomes. As a result, housing costs are a greater burden for many households today than a decade ago, leaving less for other basic needs and amenities. Renters, and renters of color in particular, face a considerable shortage of affordable housing opportunities. While housing costs are one of myriad reasons people experience homelessness, there is a close correlation between the growing number of people experiencing homelessness with rising housing costs. And these households are often the most at risk of losing their housing and experiencing homelessness.

Regional growth centers and communities near transit are home to more people of color and higher concentrations of poverty than the region as a whole. As these central places continue to grow and develop, residents and businesses who contribute to these communities should have the option to remain and thrive and take advantage of new amenities and services. The Stability strategies call for education and financial support to provide opportunities for residents to continue to live in community, and to promote development that ensures housing is near transit, childcare, and other services and amenities needed to improve quality of life.

To reflect these needs and opportunities to improve housing stability, the Regional Housing Strategy calls for:

- Expand and strengthen tenant assistance and protections, and their enforcement to provide opportunities for residents to continue to live in their communities
 - **Provide tenant counseling and assistance and landlord education** to further fair housing and the ability of tenants to remain in safe, healthy housing. Cities can

work cooperatively and through local housing agencies to provide assistance, education, and enforce tenant protections to ensure available affordable housing meets basic health and safety standards.

- Increase access to home ownership, with an emphasis on BIPOC homeownership
 - **Advocate for a bill to support equitable home ownership assistance** that expands home ownership and down payment assistance programs to provide support for renters seeking to purchase a home in their community. Often renters are able to afford the monthly costs of housing, but lack the ability to make the down payment at the costs of housing today. This is especially significant for people of color, who still face the ongoing effects of systemic racism in housing. White residents are more likely to own their own home than Black residents across all income levels. Past efforts to provide low-cost mortgages and low-interest loans have been successful at increasing homeownership. A modern federal program could work use these tools to improve access to home ownership to low-income families and people of color and support alternative ownership models such as community land trusts.
- Increase services and amenities to provide access to opportunity in low opportunity areas experiencing housing growth.
 - **Incentivize early childhood education centers, medical care, and other community serving commercial uses in mixed-used development.** Stable, affordable housing and community serving commercial uses – such as early education, medical care, community banking, and social services – set the foundation for economic opportunity. Families in the region face high housing cost burdens and are often displaced from high opportunity areas. Community-serving commercial uses are similarly being displaced, and there is already a shortage of services in many communities. Development regulations can help to accelerate the development of community-serving commercial uses as ground floor commercial uses in new mixed-use development.
- Leverage growth near transit and higher opportunity areas to incentivize and/or require the creation and preservation of long-term affordable housing
 - **Use ~~voluntary and/or mandatory~~ incentives** to include affordable housing in all new development in proximity to transit and in higher opportunity areas. These incentives may be voluntary or mandatory, dependent on local needs and market strength. Transit station areas are most at risk of displacement as they grow and people seek to take advantage of the region's investments in transportation. Providing housing for moderate- and low-income households will increase the opportunities for families to remain in their communities even as they growth and change. These areas are particularly suited to incentives and affordability requirements that can be included as areas near transit are zoned

for higher densities. Other higher opportunity areas, including single family zones, may also be suited to affordability incentives that can leverage strong housing markets to increase inclusion. Incentives should be designed to support the development of affordable housing, not stifle production by adding to the costs of development.

- **Adopt MFTE in all areas near frequent transit** where allowed under state law. The multifamily tax exemption allowed by state law has been shown in PSRC's survey of local jurisdictions to be the most effective tool at creating more housing and housing units at moderate-income levels. Continuing and expanding its use to all allowed areas would be a major factor in creating housing for households earning less than 80% AMI. MFTE could be used with other incentives, funding and tools to also reach lower income levels and expand the subsidy longer than the usual 8- or 12-year period. Smaller communities may need assistance from multi-jurisdiction housing organizations to implement MFTE.

Subsidy: Create and sustain long-term funding sources to create and preserve housing for very low-income households and unhoused residents

Homes provided by the private market make up most housing in the region. However, the private market alone cannot provide housing for all residents. Income restricted units (often also referred to as subsidized units) – made possible with federal, state, and local funding and incentives that ensure long-term rent or income restrictions – provide affordable housing that the private market cannot. Rent restrictions are typically set at 30 percent of the household's income, meaning that, ideally, no one living in a subsidized unit is cost burdened. Income restricted units are typically targeted to meet the needs of low and very low-income households as well as who need specific services.

The region cannot fully address affordability needs until the housing needs of extremely low-income (less than 30 percent AMI) households are met. Addressing the needs of the lowest income households will cause a chain reaction, freeing up more moderately priced housing units that are more affordable for households at higher income thresholds. The current housing crisis is not something that we can “build out way out of” with market rate housing alone. This will require significant incentives, subsidies, and funding as the private market cannot produce housing affordable to these households without public intervention. The Subsidy strategies call for identifying existing and new funding sources from a variety of housing stakeholders.

To reflect these needs and opportunities to improve housing subsidy, the Regional Housing Strategy calls for:

- Identify public, private, and philanthropic funding to increase affordable housing and access to housing for lower-income families
 - **Advocate for substantial federal and state funding** to address affordability for very low-income households. The federal government provides tax incentives for homeownership, that primarily benefits higher income households, but spending directed toward low-income households has decreased compared to historic levels. Federal rental assistance targets households with incomes below 30 percent of the median level, which are often elderly people, people with disabilities, and working poor families. Due to funding limitation, rental assistance programs only reach a fraction of those with needs. More funding for assistance and to build more affordable housing options is necessary to meet the needs for very low-income households. [Additional funding is also needed to preserve existing affordable housing and to provide more opportunities for public ownership of income restricted housing.](#) Further, addressing the need for housing at very low-income levels adds to the overall availability of housing and reduces pressure on the housing market, creating greater housing opportunities for those families at low- and moderate-income levels.
 - **Encourage major employers to finance affordable housing** construction and preservation to provide opportunities for employees to live closer to where they work. Employers are increasingly seeing housing access as critical to attracting employees, contributing to livable communities, and a moral responsibility. Major employers have recently committed to spending millions towards affordable housing and homelessness. Local jurisdictions and housing organizations can facilitate continued corporate involvement.
 - **Expand local funding options** and how they are used across the region. Adopting a housing levy or increasing general funds towards housing may be challenging for communities. However, local funding can be critical to “match” other funding sources and to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to increasing housing affordability. Local housing levies and funds have played a significant role in building housing and are often coordinated through subregional housing agencies. Recognizing that it may be impossible for smaller communities to individually develop and manage local housing funds, strengthening multi-jurisdiction housing organizations may be key to raising and coordinating housing funding.

Implementation

The collective work of PSRC, counties, cities, and other agencies and organizations is needed to implement the Regional Housing Strategy and meet the region’s housing needs. Many of

the needed actions require work by cities and counties as zoning and permitting are local functions.

Past housing planning efforts underscore that a plan is only as strong as its ability to be implemented. The Regional Housing Strategy strives to engage all 86 jurisdictions in the central Puget Sound region to address housing in a more coordinated and collaborative way, while also recognizing local circumstances. For this to happen, we as a region need to hold ourselves accountable to implementing the strategy over the coming years.

Cities and counties must be strategic in allocating funding, resources, and organizational capacity to take on planning projects in addition to the required 2024 plan update, such as new rezones and code amendments. Recognizing that individual cities have limited capacity, most communities in the region have been forming regional housing agencies, such as A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) and South King Housing and Homelessness Partnership (SKHHP) in King County, the Alliance for Housing Affordability (AHA) in Snohomish County, and South Sound Housing Affordability Partners (SSHAP) in Pierce County. Although some of these organizations are new and small, they may be critical to the implementation of the Regional Housing Strategy in their ability to coordinate work across multiple jurisdictions. Coordination at the subregional level has also proven effective for state and federal advocacy work and for engaging with major employers and other private sector stakeholders.

During the development of VISION 2050, the board discussed how jurisdictions need to hold each other accountable for meeting growth objectives and allowing for housing. As a regional planning agency, PSRC does not have regulatory to enforce the actions of the Regional Housing Strategy, but there may be opportunities to incentivize housing actions through regional funding programs or other innovative approaches. PSRC also has opportunities to expand its role in technical assistance to potentially include model code and ordinances and exploratory research to expand the region's "toolbox" of housing tools. [PSRC's Equity Advisory Committee will help to guide implementation efforts to ensure that an equity lens is applied to regional housing work.](#) Additionally, some of the actions called for in the draft Regional Housing Strategy require action at the state and/or federal level and coordination with private partners.

Based on this feedback the following implementation approaches are proposed to address existing gaps in capacity, resources and funding.

	Capacity	Resources	Funding
Federal			<p>Expand LIHTC, Section 8, credit enhancement, low interest loans, and other funding sources to build and preserve income restricted units</p> <p>Expand home ownership and down payment assistance for moderate- and lower-income households</p> <p>Expand foreclosure prevention support</p> <p>Expand Fair Housing tracking and response efforts</p>
State	<p>Support local jurisdictions in advocating for Federal reforms</p> <p>Review existing laws and pass new legislation to encourage housing construction</p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to support comprehensive plan updates and ongoing housing work</p>	<p>Expand the Housing Trust Fund to build and preserve income restricted units</p> <p>Expand home ownership and down payment assistance and matching programs for moderate- and lower-income households</p> <p>Expand foreclosure prevention support</p> <p>Expand Fair Housing tracking and response efforts</p>

	Capacity	Resources	Funding
			<p>Support the continued authorization of local funding mechanisms and provide additional funding options for local jurisdictions, including REET 3 and a payroll tax</p> <p>Provide funding for local planning efforts, specifically, the implementation of HB 1220</p>
PSRC	<p>Support state and local efforts to advocate for funding reforms</p> <p>Convene stakeholders to increase collaboration, resource sharing, and public-private partnerships</p>	<p>Provide technical assistance to support local work, including guidance on engaging community members including groups that have been historically excluded from the planning process and groups opposed to affordable housing, and model codes and ordinances</p> <p>Develop and use a typology to identify the strategies, tools, and actions that have the most potential to make an impact in different types of places.</p> <p>Explore the feasibility of potential new tools and resources,</p>	<p>Explore financial incentives for housing actions, including prioritizing transportation funding for projects that support affordable housing</p> <p>Explore housing planning requirements in Plan Review and Certification as they relate to transportation and access to jobs and services.</p>

	Capacity	Resources	Funding
		<p>including opportunities to land bank and other opportunities to drive down costs</p> <p><u>Provide technical assistance to support state work, including the implementation of HB 1220, specifically quantifying housing need at the county and local level, and developing resources and policies to address historic and current racism in housing policies and practices.</u></p> <p>Provide data and ongoing monitoring, coordinating with other local and subregional efforts. <u>Monitoring will include performance measures related to housing production and affordability, equity outcomes and implementation measures including the local adoption of tools to implement VISION 2050 and the Regional Housing Strategy.</u></p>	
Sub-Regional Agencies	Support state and local efforts to advocate for funding reforms	Support local audits of existing development	Establish and/or expand a capital fund

	Capacity	Resources	Funding
	Convene stakeholders to increase collaboration, resource sharing, and public-private partnerships	regulations and revise as needed Increase consistency in development regulations and incentives	Explore establishing a housing benefit district, if enabled
Local Jurisdictions	Join a multi-jurisdictional agency, if applicable Develop tools and strategies to reduce the risk of displacement as traditionally underserved areas, especially those near high-capacity transit, are redeveloped Utilize equity in decision making	Rezone/upzone Establish/expand tenant and landlord programs Audit existing development regulations and permit timelines, and revise as needed	Contribute to multi-jurisdictional agency capital funds, if applicable Audit existing and potential local revenue sources and adopt new sources as needed

Typology

The Regional Housing Strategy provides the region an opportunity to take a more coordinated approach to address housing access and affordability. However, the region includes a variety of jurisdictions, neighborhoods, and housing markets. Communities serve different functions in the region, such as dense downtown central business districts, smaller mixed-use neighborhood districts, and less dense single-family neighborhoods. At the local level, these places vary in their needs for housing investments and interventions, just as the people who live and work in these communities differ in their access to education, employment, housing, and other amenities and services to allow them to lead a successful life. Moreover, the local visions for these communities may differ greatly in terms of the amount and scale of future residential growth anticipated. Accordingly, different sets of strategies will help communities thrive and grow with equitable outcomes for current and future community members.

A typology is a way to retain a commonality of approach regionally while tailoring recommendations to specific locations based on their needs and opportunities. This classification framework assesses current conditions and utilizes existing regional policy to develop a framework to link appropriate implementation strategies to communities with common characteristics. The typology therefore would have two primary functions: 1) to assess existing community conditions and 2) to identify appropriate tools and actions to support housing access and affordability now and as places change and grow.

Following the adoption of the Regional Housing Strategy, PSRC will work with stakeholders to develop and use a typology to identify the strategies, tools, and actions that have the most potential to make an impact in different types of places.

Monitoring

In consultation with jurisdictions and other stakeholders, PSRC will develop a framework to track performance and outcomes over time and identify challenges or barriers over time. PSRC will also explore methods to share the most current data, such as an online dashboard. Performance measures should support the housing goal and policies in VISION 2050 and the strategies identified in the Regional Housing Strategy.

Measures will include assessment of demographic characteristics, performance measures related to housing production and affordability, equity outcomes, and implementation measures including the local adoption of tools to implement VISION 2050 and the Regional Housing Strategy. [A racial equity lens will be applied to monitoring efforts to continue to assess racial disparities in housing.](#) PSRC will publish an annual update on housing data monitoring efforts. Some data measures may be updated more or less frequently based on the availability of new data.

PSRC will work with stakeholders to develop a periodic review and update to the Regional Housing Strategy based on the results of the monitoring program and gaps and opportunities that are identified through other regional work.

Housing is critical for every resident, and every community plays a role in addressing this collective responsibility. The complexity of addressing the full range of housing needs and challenges requires a coordinated regional-local approach and will require action from cities, counties, residents, businesses, and other agencies and stakeholders to work together to meet the needs. A coordinated, regionwide effort to build and preserve housing accessible to all residents is not just about housing. It is also about building healthy, complete, and welcoming communities where all families and people, regardless of income, race, family size or need, are able to live near good schools, transit, employment opportunities, and open space.



Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

March 3, 2022

TO: Equity Advisory Committee

FROM: Jean Kim, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Regional Transportation Plan: Coordinated Mobility Plan

IN BRIEF

Over the last two months the Equity Advisory Committee has been provided briefings on various aspects of the Regional Transportation Plan. The plan has been released for a public review and comment period which runs through February 28, 2022, and board action is scheduled for April. At the meeting on March 3, 2022, staff will provide additional details on the Coordinated Mobility Plan and outreach activities conducted specifically related to this element of the RTP.

DISCUSSION

People with special transportation needs are those who have transportation challenges due to their age, income, or ability. This includes older adults (age 65+), youth (age 5-17), people with low incomes, and people with disabilities. The Coordinated Mobility Plan, a component of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), serves as the comprehensive strategy for identifying and addressing transportation challenges experienced by these groups. This encompasses not only specialized transportation services that are targeted to people with special transportation needs, but also public transit services and facilities, as well as accessible sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure. Implementation of this regional plan is a shared responsibility among transit agencies, specialized transportation providers, local jurisdictions, and other regional partners.

Over the past 15 months, PSRC staff have engaged people with special transportation needs directly through an online survey and in meetings conducted by mobility coalitions and other community-based organizations (CBOs). Working with these stakeholders as well as PSRC's Special Needs Transportation Committee, information has been compiled on the mobility challenges experienced by people with special transportation needs in the region. Required under federal and state law, prioritized strategies have also been developed to address those challenges.

Although a wide variety exists, seven key mobility challenges are being highlighted in the Coordinated Mobility Plan, representing commonly cited issues identified from the targeted outreach. These key needs and associated strategies are summarized below.

1. **Shorter travel times when taking regular transit or specialized transportation.** Strategies to address this need include coordination to reduce transfer wait times, particularly when crossing county/jurisdictional lines, addressing reliability and timeliness of service, and increasing flexibility in scheduling return trips for various types of specialized transportation services.
2. **More transportation services at times when they are needed.** Strategies include opportunities for existing providers to add service to routes or programs where they exist already but do not serve at the time needed, and development of new flexible programs in areas not already served.
3. **More information about available services.** Two strategies identified include tailoring travel training and education programs to the specific needs of targeted groups, and development of a comprehensive trip planning tool that is inclusive of specialized transportation programs.
4. **Better access to health and wellness destinations including medical facilities, pharmacies, and grocery stores.** The strategy associated with this need includes strengthening coordination and partnerships between healthcare and transportation providers to better understand and address patients' unmet transportation challenges and improve health outcomes.
5. **Affordable Transportation services.** Strategies call for transit agencies and specialized transportation providers to assess reduced fare structures for groups burdened by reduced fare costs (example: low-income families with multiple fares per trip), and to simplify the process for applying for/renewing reduced fare passes.
6. **More connected ADA-accessible infrastructure.** The strategy calls for filling in gaps and building accessible sidewalks and other infrastructure (curb cuts, etc.) with a priority in identified equity areas, health/wellness destinations, and transit stations.
7. **Better regional coordination to meet growing mobility needs.** Strategies include broadening regional coordination at the Special Needs Transportation Committee (or similar body) to include more organizations with transportation programs for people with special transportation needs, better defining roles and responsibilities around emergencies and emergency response, and improving the regional framework for assessing asset needs of specialized transportation providers.

The above challenges and strategies are included in the draft Coordinated Mobility Plan and incorporated into the draft Regional Transportation Plan, currently out for public comment through February 28, 2022.

Next Steps

At the March EAC meeting, staff will provide additional details on the Coordinated Mobility Plan element of the RTP and associated outreach activities.

Lead Staff

For more information, contact Jean Kim, Senior Planner, at 206-971-3052, or at jkim@psrc.org.



Puget Sound Regional Council

DISCUSSION ITEM

March 3, 2022

TO: Equity Advisory Committee

FROM: Maggie Moore, Senior Planner, and Gary Simonson, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Equitable Engagement Guidance for Local Jurisdictions

IN BRIEF

Community Engagement is one of four pillars of the [Regional Equity Strategy](#)¹. It includes several elements, including: 1) convening and facilitating this Committee, 2) working with local organizations and 3) creating guidance and resources for engaging with communities (both for PSRC and local jurisdiction staff).

At the March meeting, PSRC staff will provide a briefing on the draft Equitable Engagement Guidance for local jurisdictions and discuss future engagement work with the Equity Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION

PSRC develops data, guidance, and resources to support implementation of VISION through local planning. Guidance documents developed so far are available on the [VISION 2050 Planning Resources](#) page.

Planners from cities and counties in the region have asked for more resources on conducting equitable engagement for their local comprehensive plan updates. PSRC staff are developing a guidance document on equitable engagement, with examples from PSRC and the region.

The Equitable Engagement Guidance document will highlight four key considerations when conducting community engagement, as well as strategies for their implementation:

- Identify Impacted Communities
- Develop Engagement Strategy
- Establish Meaningful Relationships

¹ The four key component categories of PSRC's Regional Equity Strategy are A) Capacity Building, B) Data and Research, C) Community Engagement, and D) Best Practices.

- Meet Communities Where They're At

Next Steps

The Equitable Engagement Guidance document will be released in March 2022 to assist local jurisdictions as they begin their comprehensive planning process. PSRC staff will continue developing guidance and resources on engagement for internal use and will bring this work to the Committee.

Lead Staff

For more information, please contact Maggie Moore, Senior Planner, at mmoore@psrc.org or Gary Simonson, Senior Planner, at gsimonson@psrc.org.