



Appendix II-C: Summary of the Public Comment Period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

This appendix summarizes the results of the public review and comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. It also provides the summary responses on which the Growth Management Policy Board took an action-to-proceed in September 2006; these summary responses guided the work of staff in their development of a Preferred Growth Alternative and in the development of VISION 2040.

NOTE: This Growth Management Policy Board took an action-to-proceed on this appendix (presented to them as a stand-alone report at that time) at their September 2006 meeting. The content of this appendix has not substantively changed since the Board action, and does not reflect work done since that time developing the draft VISION 2040 and Preferred Growth Alternative.

CONTENTS OF APPENDIX

This appendix provides information regarding outreach activities and public comments received. It also provides a summary response by the Regional Council for the topics raised in the comments. Comments received are summarized as key messages regarding the alternatives and key themes by topic area.

- ***Outreach and comments received:*** The extended public comment period was successful, with Regional Council staff having been able to present the results of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the majority of jurisdictions and a variety of interest groups. Also, comments were submitted by a broad cross-section of jurisdictions across the region. *(See sections A and B)*
- ***Key message in comments regarding alternatives:*** Comments expressed strong support for focusing growth. Commenters, in nearly equal amounts, preferred the Metropolitan Cities and the Larger Cities alternatives or a hybrid alternative that uses the best elements of these two. And, a number of commenters expressed opposition to the Smaller Cities alternative. *(See section D.1)*
- ***Key themes in comments by topic area:*** Comments were provided on a wide variety of topics. Some relate directly to the *analysis* of impacts, others suggested what should or should not be included in the updated multicounty planning *policies*, and still others focused on the update *process*. *(See section D.2)*
- ***Summary responses:*** In September 2006, the Growth Management Policy Board took an action-to-proceed on a series of summary responses for each of the comment areas. As noted in the summary responses, the issues raised will primarily be addressed in the updated multicounty planning policies, preferred growth alternative, or in the subsequent environmental impact statements.



Overall, the comments demonstrate a substantial level of agreement in the region to grow in a focused and coordinated manner, and they support an approach to updating the VISION that provides regional leadership on a variety of issues while being careful to recognize local circumstances and respect local control.

The official response to comments will be published in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

A. OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement lasted 60 days, beginning on May 31, 2006 and ending on July 31, 2006. The comment period exceeded the public comment period requirement of 30 days under Washington law.

The public comment period was designed to inform the public, interest groups, affected tribes and government agencies about the project, and to gather comments about the key issues that the region's stakeholders feel should be addressed. Specifically, the public comment period focused on the findings in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Over 1,000 copies of the executive summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement were mailed to stakeholders. The summary also included a compact disk containing the full contents of the document. Hard copies of the full document and appendices were distributed to libraries throughout the region. The document was also available on the Regional Council's website, both through a table of contents webpage, as well as an interactive webpage that allowed for submitting comments.

At the beginning of the public comment period, the Regional Council held an all-day kick-off meeting, which included an in-depth review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement by a four-person Peer Review panel, and table group discussions.

Prior to and during the public comment period, Regional Council staff made significant efforts to reach out to local jurisdictions, inter-jurisdictional planning organizations, community groups, and others. During the course of the 60-day period, Regional Council staff made almost 70 presentations. Collectively, these jurisdictions are home to 71 percent of the region's residents. These presentations focused on the update process, described the alternatives and the results of the environmental analysis process, and urged involvement.

In addition, Regional Council staff also conducted environmental justice workshops in each county (with two in King County). A description of the outreach and the findings from these workshops are described in Section C.

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the geographic breadth of the outreach effort to jurisdictions. The complete list of outreach presentations is shown in Attachment 1 of this appendix.



Figure 1: PSRC Outreach Presentations to Jurisdictions



B. OUTREACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

This section provides a description of outreach to low-income and minority populations (referred to as environmental justice populations) and a summary of findings.

Outreach

Between June and September 2006, PSRC staff conducted five facilitated conversations to explore community reaction to the impacts disclosed in the VISION 202 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In June 2006, two workshops were held in King County that included participants from the community, local and state governments and social service agencies. In late July two focus group sessions were held, one each in Kitsap and Snohomish Counties. In early September, a focus group session was held in Pierce County. These sessions in Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties were primarily attended by representatives from social service and government agencies, as well as special interest groups. In total, approximately 100 people attended these discussion groups.

After a general introduction to regional planning under the Growth Management Act, an introduction to VISION 2020, and a presentation centered on specific impacts disclosed in the Environmental Justice chapter of the VISION 2020 Update Draft Environmental Impact Statement, facilitated discussions followed. These discussions particularly highlighted the issues of affordable and adequate housing, employment, transportation, access to facilities and services, air quality and environmental health.

Below are findings regarding common opinions, thoughts and ideas expressed at all five Environmental Justice outreach sessions.

Findings

When asked to express a preference for one of the alternatives analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, a clear majority at each meeting favored creating a hybrid alternative from the Metropolitan Cities and Larger Cities alternatives. Overall, participants viewed more focused growth patterns as having advantages in terms of providing job and housing opportunities to existing communities, facilitating more efficient service delivery, protecting rural, natural resource and undeveloped areas, and presenting opportunities for environmental clean up and improvement of existing urban areas. Participants generally concurred with the overall Environmental Justice impacts as disclosed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

However, participants also recognized that while there were perceived advantages to redevelopment, such as more variety of goods and services, better transportation and more cultural richness and variety, more opportunity for small businesses, and beautification of existing urban areas, redevelopment without explicit and directed programs to existing disadvantaged communities was generally viewed as gentrification – with an overall negative impact on minority communities and low-income communities. Displacement from current neighborhoods due to the high cost and competition for affordable housing is perceived as contributing to the erosion of existing low-income communities and some historic minority communities.

The majority of participants who preferred a more focused hybrid alternative also emphasized that more dispersed regional growth options would spread public and special need services too thin around the region, and place increasing strain on limited resources.

Mitigation of any impacts from growth was perceived as a key component of how the region accommodates growth, for with adequate programs, negative aspects that might be associated with redevelopment and more focused growth patterns might be avoided.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS WHO SUBMITTED COMMENTS

By the end of the public comment period, 84 letters, emails, or faxes were received. Comments were submitted from a wide range of stakeholders and geographic locations (see Figures 2, 3 and 4).

The majority of comments were received from local governments, followed by organizations and individuals, with a more limited set of comments received from businesses. Comments were submitted from stakeholders in all four central Puget Sound counties, with the majority arriving from King and Snohomish. Comments from organizations representing regionwide interests or from outside the region are included as part of other in the *by County* pie chart.

Figure 2: Breakdown of Commenters

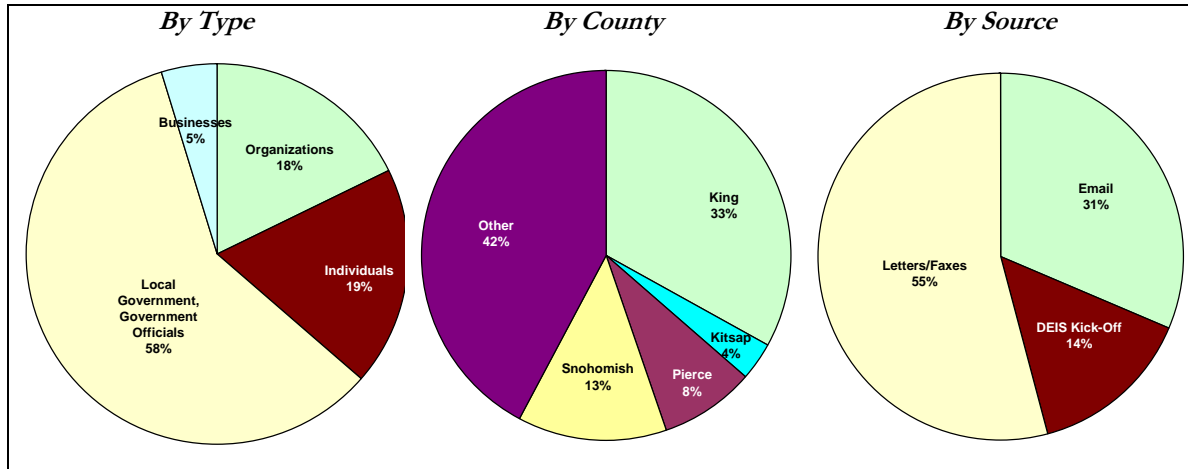


Figure 3 shows the complete list of commenters by stakeholder type.



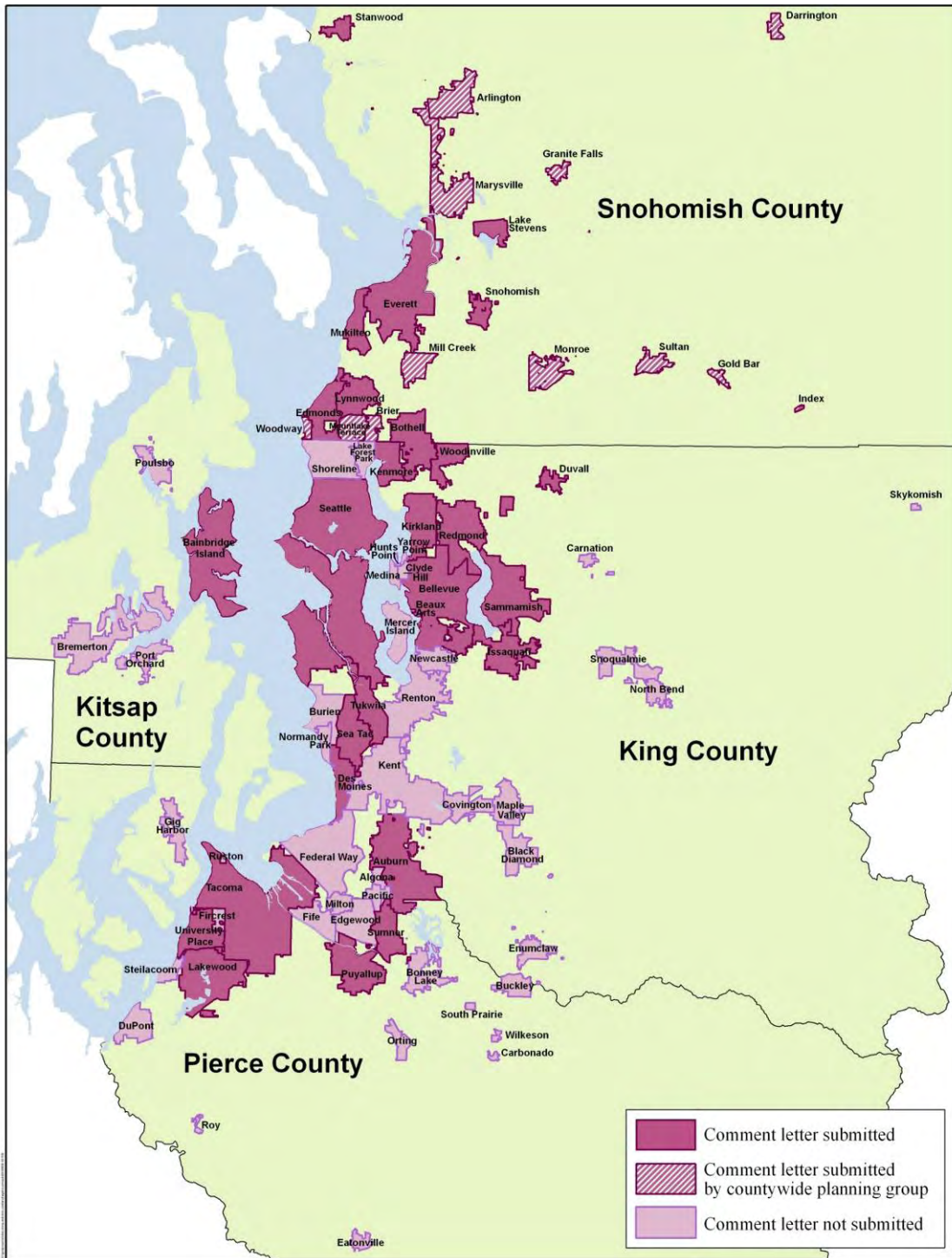
Figure 3: List of Commenters

<p><u>Federal Government (1)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region X <p><u>State Government (4)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Community Trade and Economic Development • Department of Ecology • Department of Fish and Wildlife • Department of Transportation <p><u>Regional Government/Agency (8)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King County Water District #111 • Port of Seattle • Puget Sound Clean Air Agency • Seattle/King County Public Health • Snohomish County Tomorrow • Soos Creek Water and Sewer District • Suburban Cities Association of King County • Thurston Regional Planning Council <p><u>County Government (8)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King County, Council on Aging • King County, Office of the Executive • Kitsap County, Public Works • Kitsap County, Community Development • Pierce County, Planning and Land Services • Snohomish County, Office of the Executive • Snohomish County, Planning and Development Services • Snohomish County, Public Works <p><u>City Government (30) (by county)</u></p> <p><u>King</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auburn • Bellevue • Bothell • Des Moines • Issaquah • Issaquah, Redmond, Sammamish joint letter • Kenmore • Kirkland • Newcastle • Redmond • Sammamish • SeaTac • Seattle • Seattle Planning Commission • Tukwila • Woodinville 	<p><u>City Government (by county) - continued...</u></p> <p><u>Kitsap</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bainbridge Island <p><u>Pierce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lakewood • Puyallup • Sumner • Tacoma • University Place <p><u>Snohomish</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edmonds • Everett • Lake Stevens • Lynnwood • Mukilteo • Snohomish • Stanwood <p><u>Business (4)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AHBL • Halcyon Planning and Urban Design • Miravest, Inc. • Puget Sound Energy <p><u>Civic Organizations (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierce County Chamber of Commerce • Seattle Chinatown Chamber of Commerce <p><u>Interest Groups (11)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cascade Bicycle Alliance • Cascade Land Conservancy • Coalition for Effective Transportation Alternatives • Feet First • Futurewise • Housing Development Consortium • League of Women Voters • Puget Sound Urban Design Team • Seattle-King County Acting Food Policy Council • Sustainable Seattle • Transportation Choices Coalition <p><u>Education Institutions (2)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Washington • Bellevue Community College <p><u>Individuals (16)</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>As of August 17, 2006</i></p>
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Figure 4 provides an illustration of the geographic breadth of the jurisdictions submitting comments. In addition to all four counties, the figure shows all of the jurisdictions in Snohomish County, because these jurisdictions were co-signers to the letter submitted by Snohomish County Tomorrow. Collectively, the jurisdictions below are home to 71 percent of the region's residents.



Figure 4: Jurisdictions That Submitted Comments



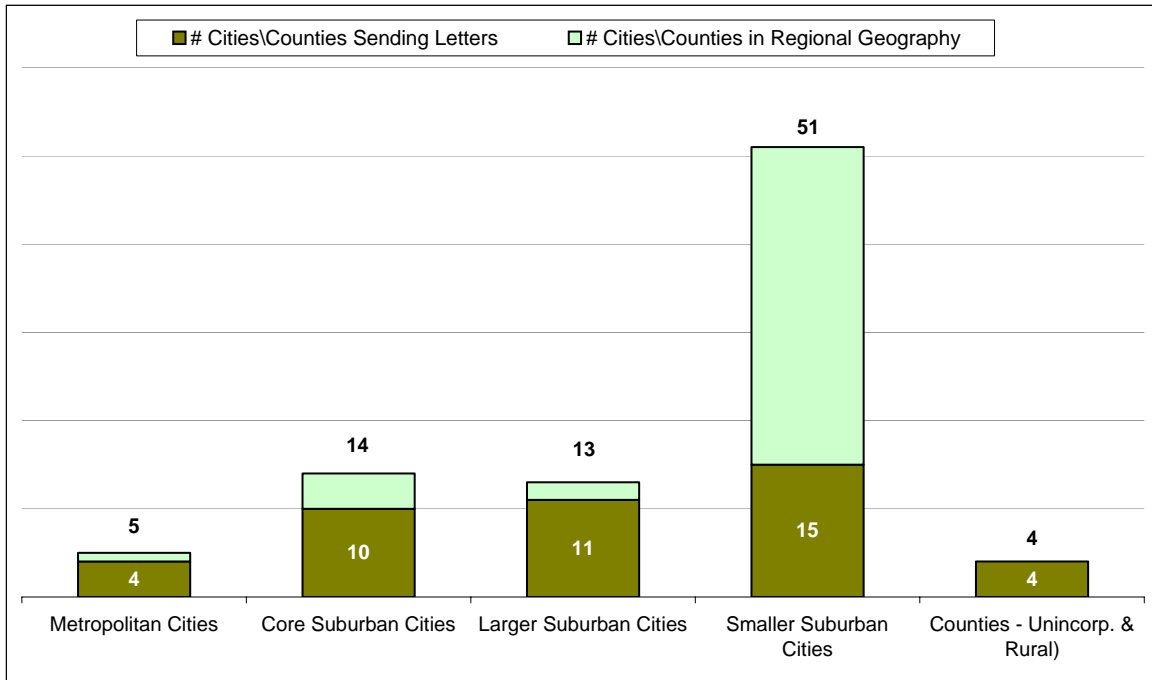
Notes: all four counties submitted a comment letter(s).

A key feature of the VISION 2020 Update is the classification of the region's jurisdictions into regional geographies. The regional geographies are the primary unit of analysis that define the four growth distribution alternatives studied in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.



As shown in Figure 5, a higher proportion of the metropolitan, core suburban, and larger suburban regional geography cities submitted comment letters than smaller suburban cities. The totals include all of the jurisdictions in Snohomish County, since these jurisdictions were co-signers to the letter submitted by Snohomish County Tomorrow.

Figure 5: Commenters by Regional Geography



Note: the figure includes all cities in Snohomish County.

D. KEY THEMES FROM COMMENTS

The comments received cover a wide range of issues and represent a cross-section of the regional community, particularly its local government sector. In total, 84 comment letters were received. Comments received after July 31, 2006 have been included in the official record of comments.

To facilitate review by the Regional Council's boards and other interested parties, the comment letters were numbered and placed in binders. Each binder contains a table of contents and the complete set of letters and all attachments. Binders were made available for the Growth Management Policy Board and the other boards and the public through the Regional Council's Information Center. These comments will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement along with the Regional Council's responses to the issues raised.

This section of the appendix contains two parts – key messages regarding the alternatives and key themes by topic area. Responses that received an action-to-proceed by the Growth Management Policy Board at its September 2006 meeting are also included in the subsequent text.

Need to Revisit Adopted Plans

"The analysis of the Growth Targets Extended strongly points to the need to re-think our current direction and the implications of accommodating 1.7 million more people under our current growth plans...

Development of a preferred alternative will require each jurisdiction to seriously consider and analyze the regional centers, growth targets, and planned infrastructure improvements currently in place."

- *Pierce County*

Respect Diversity of Local Plans

"We want to emphasize that each county has developed in different ways and at different rates and the value of diversity should be embraced in the development of the preferred plan.

We would like to see a coherent and positive regional vision, but one that recognizes our differences. It is in the details that the region can make a realistic assessment of opportunities, capacities and constraints."

-*Snohomish County Tomorrow*

Praise for Environmental Justice

"Thank you for your thoughtful exploration of environmental justice implications. Often the environmental documents ... have a very superficial treatment of environmental justice, when it is sometimes the poorest and most marginalized populations who are most affected.

Please consider how the affordable housing dilemma...can be meaningfully probed within this chapter."

- *City of Lakewood*

Consider Role and Vocabulary of Regional Design

"The concepts of design go beyond the aesthetic; design is what ties things together. Design assembles component parts into larger structures...

Assertive, proactive initiatives will be necessary to use urban and regional design as a means to create and drive a regional vision."

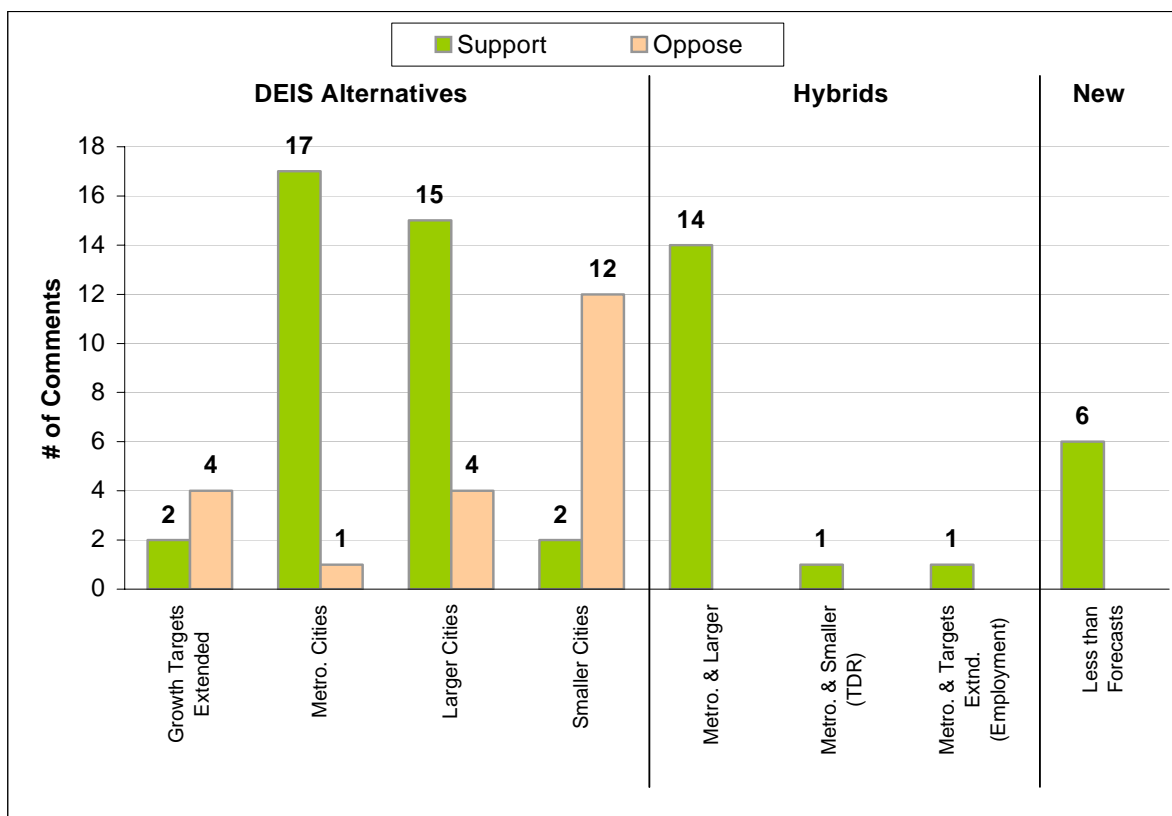
-*Puget Sound Urban Design Team*



1. Key Messages Regarding the Alternatives

Almost all of the letters included a comment related to the alternatives. Comments included support or opposition to the four growth alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, suggestions for a number of hybrid alternatives, and a few suggestions for a new alternative. Figure 6 provides a quantitative assessment of the comments regarding the alternatives and is followed by bullets describing the comments.

Figure 6: Comments on the Alternatives



Comments on DEIS Alternatives

- Growth Targets Extended Alternative:*** More commenters opposed this alternative than supported it. Those supporting this alternative generally stated that the levels of growth were most consistent with their adopted local comprehensive plan, and therefore this alternative was most likely to fit with the existing plans for transportation, infrastructure, economic development, services, and more. Those opposing stated the negative aspect of having population and housing far from employment. Some of these comments related to the estimated high levels of vehicle miles traveled and the resulting environmental impacts, and the level of growth in and near more pristine areas.
- Metropolitan Cities Alternative:*** This alternative received the largest number of letters of support and the fewest letters of opposition. However, many of the supporters also expressed support for the Larger Cities alternative (sometimes stating support equally, sometimes saying the Metropolitan Cities alternative was the best, and sometimes saying it was the second best). The rationale for support generally focused on the transportation benefits, protecting of rural and natural resource areas, and the efficiency of focusing growth where higher levels of infrastructure exist (such as high-capacity transit or human services agencies) or are planned. While expressing support, many stated the need to improve on issues such as affordable housing, job/housing balance, and urban ecology programs. Those opposing stated that these areas were already too crowded and had too many existing adverse impacts.



- **Larger Cities Alternative:** This alternative received a similar amount of support as the Metropolitan Cities alternative (again, noting that many supporters of this alternative also expressed support for Metropolitan Cities or a hybrid of the two). Supporters expressed similar reasons as for the Metropolitan Cities alternative; however, in choosing this alternative, many noted that it had greater potential for affordable housing and for more widespread economic benefits throughout the region. Those opposing primarily focused on the amount of growth in the larger suburban cities, expressing concerns that the level growth would create too many impacts, potentially changing the character of these cities, which, they stated would be built-out under existing adopted plans.
- **Smaller Cities Alternative:** More commenters opposed this alternative than supported it. This alternative received the least support (tied with Growth Targets Extended) and by far the most opposition. Supporters generally stated a goal of moving growth to outlying areas to protect their cities from more growth and/or to spread out growth and therefore avoid additional transportation congestion in their area. Those opposing cited a wide range of concerns, including high levels of growth near more-pristine areas, the difficulty of serving this growth pattern with transit, the high cost of extending infrastructure to these areas, and the negative impact it could have on low-income residents.

Comments on Hybrid Alternatives

- **Metropolitan Cities and Larger Cities:** Commenters stated a preference for a focused growth alternative that represented the best parts of these two alternatives. Sometimes the commenters were specific as to what portions of each alternative they wanted in the hybrid and sometimes they were not. Also, some of the supporters for this hybrid also expressed support for either of these two alternatives individually (i.e., there is some duplication between the hybrid and these alternatives separately). In general, those supporting this hybrid expressed desire for focusing both population and employment inside the urban growth area, supporting a jobs/housing balance, minimizing environmental impacts, and promoting strong local economies by shifting some of the employment growth to the larger suburban cities. On specific issues, such as parks, infrastructure, concurrency, or land capacity, supporters suggested that there were distinctions between these alternatives, and therefore a hybrid of the two was best.
- **Metropolitan Cities and Smaller Cities (Transfer of Development Rights):** This alternative was suggested by one commenter with a specific purpose – to permit flexibility for smaller cities to grow through accepting development rights from their surrounding rural areas (and then facilitating the transfer through infrastructure funding). This hybrid envisions the majority of residential and job growth occurring in urban centers to create vibrant cities. It also permits/incentivizes growth in these smaller cities to reduce development pressure on rural and resource lands while still providing an economic return for landowners in these areas.
- **Metropolitan Cities and Growth Targets Extended (Employment):** This alternative was suggested by one commenter in response to the definition of the four alternatives, wherein the Metropolitan Cities alternative allocated less growth to Pierce County (based upon the number of cities within the different regional geographic classes) than did the Growth Targets Extended alternative. While supporting a focusing of growth within Pierce County's largest cities, this hybrid envisions assigning more growth to Pierce County overall, noting that these cities are generally less dense and therefore have a greater capacity to accommodate increased residential and employment growth. Part of the rationale for this hybrid is to help shift more of the employment growth to Pierce County to create a better jobs/housing balance.



Comments on New Alternative

- Less than Regional 2040 Forecasts:** Supporters of this new alternative generally expressed sentiment around two issues – concurrency and sustainability. For concurrency issues, supporters suggested that if transportation (and perhaps other infrastructure) concurrency could not be met then, consistent with their interpretation of state law, growth should not be allowed. For sustainability issues, supporters generally questioned whether the region's natural resources could accommodate the adverse impacts of the full amount (1.6 million population and 1.1 million employment) of forecasted growth. The commenters suggested that an alternative that planned for substantially less growth should be included in the analysis.

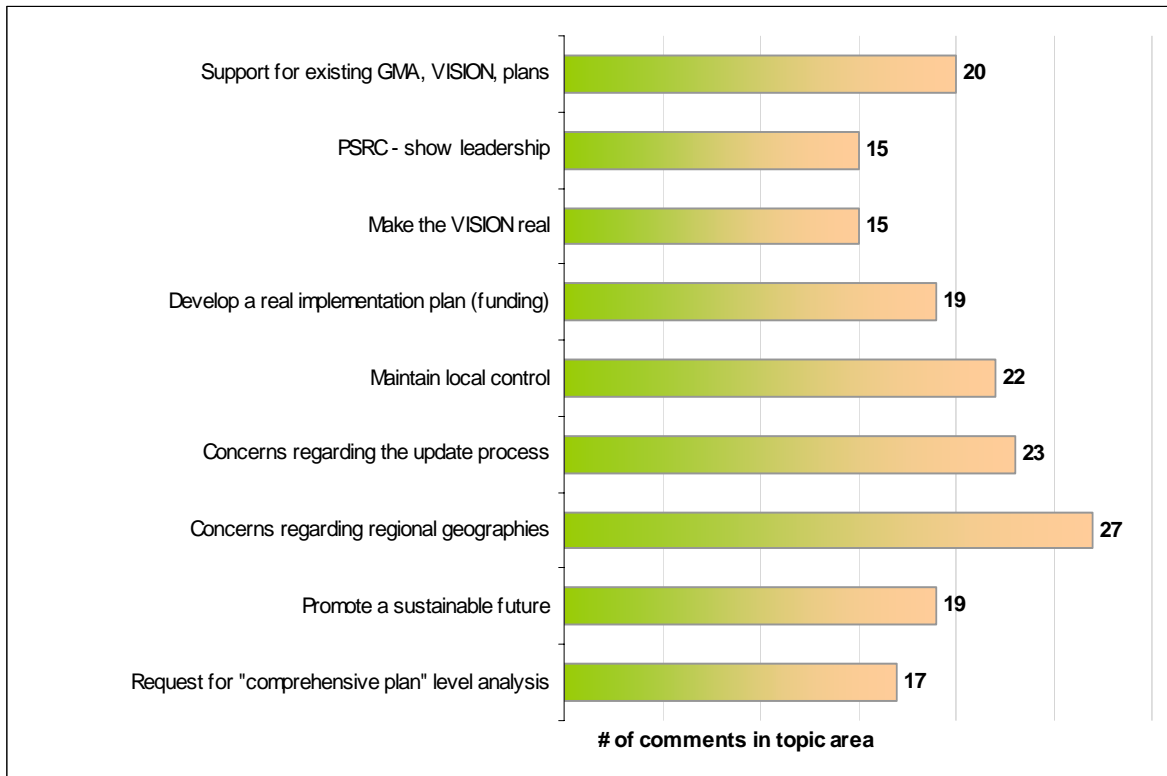
SUMMARY GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICY BOARD'S (GMPB) RESPONSE REGARDING A NEW ALTERNATIVE: (action to proceed on response take in September 2006)

The Regional Council does not intend to analyze a new alternative that assumes less growth than the 2040 regionwide forecast of 1.6 million new residents and 1.1 million new employees. This decision recognizes the charge of the state Growth Management Act to manage rather than control growth and the desire to remain consistent with the State Office of Financial Management (OFM) population forecast process. Studying alternatives are consistent with the OFM process makes the regional vision more useful and understandable to local governments as they apply regional guidance in developing growth targets.

2. Key Themes by Topic Area

Comments were given on a wide variety of topics. Figures 7 and 8 provide a quantitative assessment of the comments, and are followed by bullets describing the comments.

Figure 7: Comments by Topic Area - Big Picture/Process



Description of Big Picture/Process Comments:

- **Support for existing GMA, VISION, and plans:** Throughout the comment letters, support for existing planning processes was expressed. Almost none of the letters suggested an alternate approach, although on specific issues comments did suggest that some additional work and heightened focus might be needed.

<p><u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u> (action on response taken 09/06)</p> <p><i>The Board expressed reassurance regarding the strong amount of support for existing plans, the state Growth Management Act, and VISION 2020. This support represents a large constituency for building on existing regional agreements, and reinforces the findings from previous outreach.</i></p>

- **PSRC – show leadership:** These comments ranged from general support for regional leadership in implementing the updated VISION, to suggestions such as better coordinating with special purpose districts, forming a climate change and environment board, establishing a regional transfer of development rights program, and setting mode split/vehicle miles traveled reduction goals.

<p><u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u> (action on response taken 09/06)</p> <p><i>The Board agreed that the Regional Council, through the VISION update, should continue to show leadership. This involves continuing to build on existing processes and plans, rather than maintaining the status quo. Similar to the outcomes of past outreach, the VISION update intends to continue to focus on addressing new issues, seeking to clarify the VISION, and establishing actions and measures where appropriate.</i></p>
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- **Make the VISION real:** These commenters strongly indicated the need for a clearer, more implementable VISION, suggesting that that VISION should identify specific ways to mitigate housing costs, should include or lead to the identification of important habitat lands for permanent conservation, should include technical assistance and plan monitoring approaches, and more.

<p><u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u> (action on response taken 09/06)</p> <p><i>The Board agreed with the comments to make the VISION real, stating that the update will stress clarity, action, and measurement, should seek to offer tangible solutions, and should continue to follow the path of the State Growth Management Act (from the general - 13 Planning Goals - to the specific - growth targets, for example). Further the VISION process intends to develop a numeric preferred growth alternative, clearer multicounty planning policies, and perhaps a stronger monitoring program.</i></p>
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- **Develop a real implementation plan (funding):** With a focus on funding for transportation and infrastructure, these commenters expressed a strong desire for an investment strategy for accommodating growth. This strategy should be based on incentives and reward jurisdictions for achieving targets and taking growth. If funding cannot be found, some suggested that growth be redistributed or limited.

<p><u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u> (action on response taken 09/06)</p> <p><i>The Board agreed with the comments to develop a real implementation plan for the VISION. The Regional Council intends to explore a regional funding initiative that considers state, regional, and local revenue to address the impacts of growth as part of the VISION's future work. Also, the VISION will seek to advance types and locations of growth that come closest to paying for itself. Last, the Regional Council intends to better explain the use of funds distributed by PSRC, including the regional and countywide funds, and explore the concept of seeking to reward jurisdictions in the funding process for doing the right thing in accommodating growth.</i></p>



- **Maintain local control:** Receiving the second most comments, this topic ranged from providing flexibility in the preferred growth alternative in order to respect adopted comprehensive plans, to stating opposition to *any* directive policies. These also urged that no minimum density standard be discussed or adopted, that no new certification responsibilities or mandates be developed, and expressed the need for a clearer explanation of the role of the VISION in the planning processes.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)

The Board agreed with the comments regarding the need to respect local control, stating that "this is a given" in the VISION update process. The Board noted that as a membership organization, the members govern the Regional Council, that issues should be addressed at the lowest jurisdictional level appropriate, and stated their desire for the VISION to balance regional needs with local interests.

Further, the Board noted that the VISION seeks regional agreement and areas within which to work together, and that the regional role is to help local governments achieve objectives that they cannot accomplish working alone such as the designation of Regional Growth Centers. The Board recognized that new areas of regional agreement are possible, for example addressing affordable housing or job/housing balance.

- **Concerns regarding regional geographies:** This topic received the most comments – some general and some very specific. General comments included support or preference for continuing a centers-based approach in the preferred growth strategy, questions regarding how the preferred growth alternative numbers will work, and concerns that the regional geographies approach is flawed in that it doesn't reflect the differences between cities within a regional geography class. Specific comments were given regarding the individual city numbers published in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the placement of individual jurisdictions into specific geographic categories, and concerns regarding whether the numbers were feasible given that some cities believe they will be fully built-out by their comprehensive plan horizon year or are limited in accepting growth given funding constraints and issues such as concurrency.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)

The Board intends to clarify the purpose of the regional geographies in the VISION update process, noting the following:

1. *The Board recognizes that character differences exist within cities included in each regional geography. The regional geographies are defined only by population and employment thresholds. Local differences will be sorted out by the localities as they work together to establish targets in the countywide process. This approach incorporates local perspectives and choices while providing a unifying regional message.*
2. *Regional geographies should be used in the preferred growth alternative to meet the goals of being more specific, measurable, and clear, but that the growth strategy should remain centers based.*
3. *Regional geography numbers are important, but the percentage will be used more often.*
4. *Population and employment numbers should be published in the Supplemental Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements, but they should be at the regional geography level, rather than at the individual jurisdiction level. This involves painting the alternatives at the grid-cell level and then aggregating the data to the Transportation Analysis Zone level. It also involves working closely with a technical committee of local jurisdiction staff. This approach is fully consistent with the approach used in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.*
5. *Future work will be done by the Regional Council to provide a technical amendment to the preferred growth alternative at a time that coincides with and informs future countywide targeting work. This amendment will reflect changes within regional geographies categories based on annexations, incorporations, or other changes.*



- **Concerns regarding the update process:** Related to many of the previous bullets (such as support for existing planning, show leadership, or maintain local control), these include the need to be cautious and work closely with local jurisdiction staff, provide more time for outreach and comment, and to more fully include Thurston County and other neighboring counties in the analysis and process. A few comments questioned the results of the transportation model, suggested there was a bias against sprawl and rural growth, and that there was bias shown in the outreach activities.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)

The Regional Council intends to better explain a number of items regarding the update process in its upcoming work:

1. *The outreach process and timing.*
2. *The charge from the Regional Council's Executive Board from the initial scoping process, and the regional role, the roles of the VISION.*
3. *The role of the preferred growth alternative.*

- **Promote a sustainable future:** These comments suggested that sustainability must be a central goal that includes living and growing in a way that does not diminish resources or take away options from future generations. Other aspects include building community and places for social interaction, and going beyond protecting or improving the environment to taking actions that led to fully-functioning and self-sustaining natural systems.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)

The Regional Council intends to advance the concept of sustainability in the VISION document. This includes the long-term perspective of not taking options or resources away from future generations, and a shorter-term perspective of the sustainability of cities in the face of forecasted growth, which should include issues such as concurrency, and selecting a preferred growth alternative that comes closest to having growth pay for itself. Last, the Board noted that growth can provide a benefit that advances sustainability; an example was given of the Thea Foss Waterway in Tacoma, where growth allowed the city to finance cleanup and remediation actions that might have been otherwise unaffordable.

- **Request for comprehensive plan level analysis:** Commenters identified a wide range of issues that they believed should be better addressed in the environmental impact statement. General comments suggested new approaches to the definition and analysis of alternatives that would be based on buildable lands, policy assessments, fiscal analysis, feasibility studies, concurrency standards, and more. Others asked for analysis of issues such as ferry loadings/unloadings, micro-scale health analyses, or for the documentation of which local governments had historic preservation ordinances and programs.

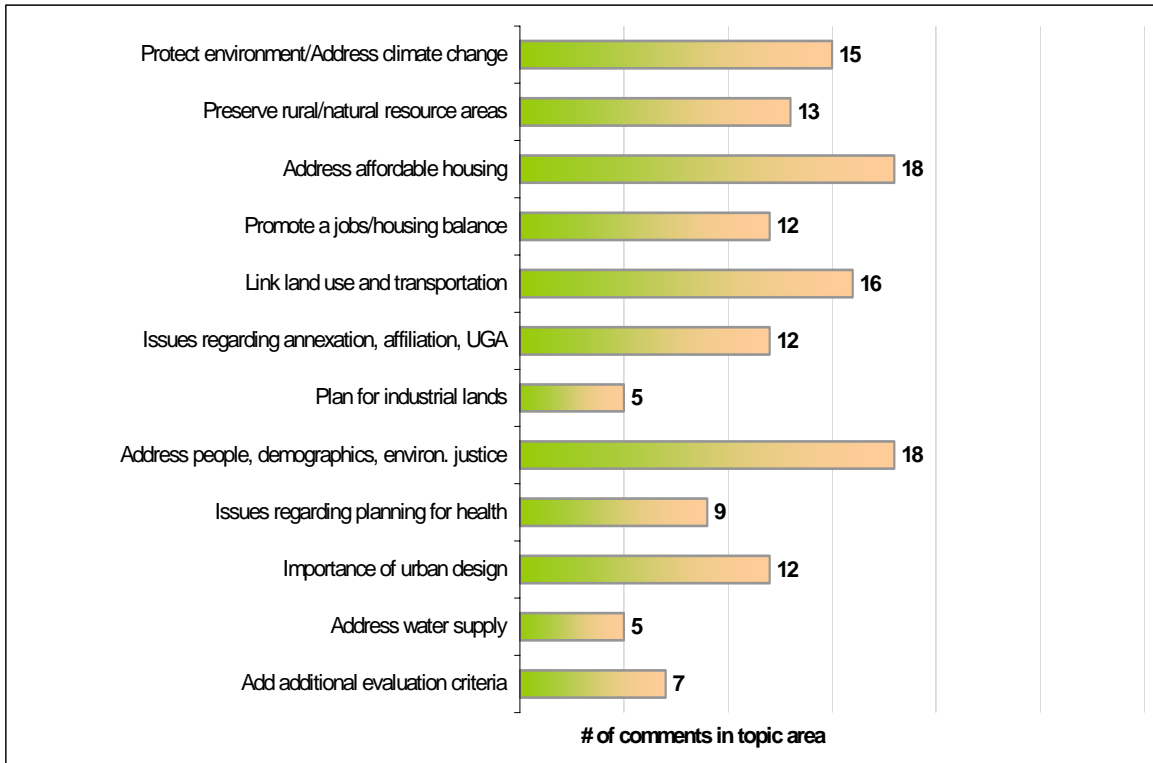
GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)

The Regional Council does not intend to undertake any local or comprehensive plan level of analysis, but rather to clarify a number of issues. First, the Board stated that the regional role is to develop a long range VISION for a preferred growth distribution that covers a very large geography, looks very long range, and is much less detailed than local comprehensive plans. Subsequently, the appropriate local role is for local comprehensive plans and the targeting process to then determine how it works in each jurisdiction.

As an illustrative example, the Board pondered a "what if" question regarding costs, resources, and impacts to the timeline of the VISION update if the region attempted to set land capacity analysis in motion, or attempted to account for all costs, benefits, and sources of funding (for example, for sewers, water, and more); this pondering reaffirmed the Regional Council's decision.



Figure 8: Comments by Topic Area - Specific Issues



Description of Specific Issue Comments:

- Protect environment/Address climate change:** Expressing a similar intent to the previous bullet, but with a focus on the environment and climate change, these comments suggested protecting the health of the Puget Sound, growing in a manner that minimizes air pollutants, protecting habitat, and reducing energy consumption. Comments on climate change asked that the issue be addressed more fully in the environmental impact statement, in the updated policies, and in future Regional Council activities.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to protect the environment and to address climate change. Early in the process, the Board directed that the revised VISION should be developed within an environmental and sustainability framework, and that future work could include the Regional Council developing a regional environmental planning program.

- Preserve rural/natural resource areas:** These comments also had an environmental theme. However, commenters supported the value of rural and natural resources areas for their benefit to the region's overall quality of life, to the region's food supply, and, in part, to the region's economy. Suggestions for accomplishing this preservation included limiting growth, transferring development rights and using approaches such as low-impact development or clustered growth into rural villages.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to preserve rural and natural resource areas in the VISION update. Elements of how to accomplish this could include a limit on rural growth as part of the preferred growth alternative, a stronger definition of rural lands, and recognition of the importance of maintaining the economic viability of rural lands in order to preserve rural character.



- **Address affordable housing:** These comments asked that the issue be addressed more fully. Connected to showing leadership, these comments included a call for PSRC to develop a stronger housing component in the update process.

<u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u>	(action on response taken 09/06)
<i>The Board agreed with the comments to better address issues surrounding affordable housing. Elements of how to accomplish this could include policies requiring local jurisdictions to document their efforts to implement housing targets, and setting housing goals and then monitoring them. This also includes better explaining the true cost of housing based on location, land supply versus unit production in housing supply/ demand, and a stronger housing monitoring effort that considers issues such as rents, presence of housing programs and/or organizations, and overall housing production.</i>	

- **Promote a jobs/housing balance:** Commenters indicated the need for addressing the issue. As noted in the previous section on the alternatives, many of these comments dealt with encouraging jobs to housing rich areas and adding housing to jobs rich areas, while still focusing economic and population growth in the urban growth area and in cities.

<u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u>	(action on response taken 09/06)
<i>The Board agreed with the comments to promote a better jobs/housing balance. This is to be addressed through a preferred growth alternative that promotes adding housing to job rich areas and adding jobs to housing rich areas. It is also addressed in updated policies. This also includes better explaining the appropriate scale for jobs/housing balance as well as the complexity of the issue.</i>	

- **Link land use and transportation:** A strong theme in these comments was to link transportation plans to the updated VISION – both the *Destination 2030* and Sound Transit-Phase 2 investments. Other suggestions included more analysis of high-occupancy-toll (HOT) lanes and congestion pricing, focusing growth in corridors, and promoting good transportation planning principles (such as connectivity and multimodal approaches) to help support growth objectives.

<u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u>	(action on response taken 09/06)
<i>The Board agreed with the comments to better link land use and transportation. Elements of how to accomplish this could include strengthen existing policies, emphasizing and supporting the regional growth strategy, and explaining that Destination 2030 will be better aligned with the revised growth strategy when it is updated.</i>	

- **Issues regarding unincorporated urban growth area annexation and affiliation:** The primary sentiment in these comments related to the ability and, in the commenters' opinions, the appropriateness of focusing more growth into the unincorporated urban growth area, noting that growth in these areas should not be overlooked. They noted that density in some of these areas is higher than in the adjacent cities and that cities are already planning with their respective counties for annexing these areas. Commenters suggested being ambitious but realistic in limiting growth and supporting policies to affiliate these areas with cities for future annexations.

<u>GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE:</u>	(action on response taken 09/06)
<i>The Board agreed with the comments to better address issues related to annexation and affiliation of unincorporated urban growth areas. Elements of how to accomplish this could include supporting annexation, supporting a limited number of incorporations, and affiliating the entire unincorporated urban area. This also includes showing both population and employment for each regional geography with and without annexation as part of the updated VISION.</i>	



- **Plan for industrial lands:** Commenters stated their views on the importance of these areas for industrial (and military) employment that pay higher-level wages. They focused both on the analysis in the environmental impact statement and on the need for strong policies that limit encroachment, non-compatible adjacent uses, and the overall need to zone and permit in a manner that protects these lands.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to plan for industrial lands. Elements of how to accomplish this include maintaining current policy (which includes protection of these land from incompatible uses, seeking to maximize the use of existing lands before establishing new lands, and more), and potentially undertaking future work to update the Industrial Lands analysis that the Regional Council completed in the late 1990s.

- **Address people, demographics, environmental justice:** A wide range of related issues were raised in these comments, including strong statements of support for having an environmental justice component as well as disappointment that the impacts of changing demographics was not more widely considered in the environmental impact statement. Some issues raised included better assessing the needs of the elderly, addressing issues of homelessness, considering food security, and more fully addressing issues of crime, poverty, and segregation.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to address issues related to people, demographics, and environmental justice. This includes better explaining the environmental justice analysis and public outreach. Also, it includes promoting a focused growth alternative, which better support the needs of the region's changing demographics.

- **Issues regarding planning for health:** These comments primarily cited the importance of planning for healthy communities, stating their support for what is included in the environmental impact statement, interest in more analysis/documentation, and for promoting this issue in the updated multicounty policies.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to address issues related to the linkage between land use and health, noting that this is now a state requirement under the Growth Management Act. Elements of how to accomplish this could include distributing research findings that show the land use/health relationship, and recognizing that health is an added benefit of focused growth. This linkage could also be addressed in the updated multicounty planning policies.

- **Importance of urban design:** Nearly all of these comments related to the importance of high-quality design in accommodating growth. Elements of urban design included preserving historic assets and character, protecting open space (both in jurisdictions and as a way to frame jurisdictions), using a systems-approach to planning for growth, and creating an urban form with defined edges based on natural systems.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments regarding the importance of urban design, stating that this is a major part of the implementation question in the update. The Board noted that a team of professional urban designers are working to provide input, and that this issue could also be addressed in the updated multicounty planning policies.



- **Address water supply:** A small number of comments were submitted with a central theme of better analysis on the multiple aspects of this topic (flooding, river flows, imperviousness, adequacy of capacity for serving growth) in the environmental impact statement. The commenters pointed out that this issue needs regional attention and could be a major barrier to achieving the VISION.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board agreed with the comments to address the issue of water supply. The Board noted that coordination work at the regional level is needed and appropriate, and that the Regional Council could do future work on this issue.

- **Add additional evaluation criteria:** Comments for the most part suggested additions to the published criteria. Specific examples include the rate of land consumption, improving or restoring ecological connectivity, and impacts on natural resource-based industries. General comments included concerns regarding the use of qualitative assessment, better aligning the criteria with the environmental impact statement chapters, explaining how the criteria are to be used/scored/ranked, and discussing how the criteria would or could be used at future decision stages.

GMPB SUMMARY RESPONSE: (action on response taken 09/06)
The Board directed staff to investigate some of the suggestions for additional transportation-related measures. Other requested additions were determined to be either not sensitive to growth distribution alternatives, more appropriate for monitoring, or redundant to current measures.

E. CONCLUSIONS

As the region looks forward and plans for growth out to the year 2040, support for focusing growth exists among the majority of the region's local jurisdictions and others that commented on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

- **Alternatives:** Comments expressed strong support for focusing growth for a wide variety of reasons – environmental, infrastructure efficiency, environmental justice, and sustainability. There was nearly an equal amount of support for the Metropolitan Cities and the Larger Cities alternatives, or a hybrid of these, to serve as the preferred growth alternative. In selecting these alternatives, as opposed to Growth Targets Extended, jurisdictions and others seem to have indicated support for re-assessing adopted plans.
- **Topics:** Comments were given on a wide variety of topics. Some relate directly to the content in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement *document*, others suggested what should or should not be included in the updated multicounty planning *policies*, and still others focused on the update *process*. Similar to comments received during the initial scoping process in 2003, many commenters reiterated the theme of being bold, showing leadership, and making the VISION more real and implementable. At the same time, many commenters in 2006 supported being cautious and respecting a bottom-up process for managing growth.

Overall, the comments demonstrate a solid level of agreement in the region to grow in a focused and coordinated manner. They also support an approach to updating the VISION that provides regional leadership on a variety of issues while being careful to recognize local circumstances and respect local control.

Key issues in the preferred growth alternative, updated policies, and the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement will likely be jobs/housing balance, linking land use and transportation, the impact on local plans and countywide growth targets processes, support for urban design and a varied urban form, and protection of the environment.



F. ATTACHMENT

The following attachment is provided to support the analysis of the results of public review and comment:

APPENDIX 4 - ATTACHMENT 1: COMPLETE LIST OF OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS

<u>Local Jurisdictions - Presentations Given</u>	<u>Local Jurisdictions - Presentations Given - continued</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arlington • Auburn • Bellevue • Bothell • Bremerton • Burien • Des Moines • Dupont • Duvall • Edgewood • Edmonds • Everett • Federal Way • Fife • Granite Falls • Issaquah • Kenmore • Kent • King County • Kirkland • Kitsap County • Lake Forest Park • Lakewood • Lynnwood • Mill Creek • Milton • Mountlake Terrace • Mukilteo • Newcastle • Pierce County • Port of Seattle • Poulsbo • Puyallup • Redmond • Renton • Sammamish • SeaTac • Seattle • Snohomish • Sultan • Sumner • Tacoma • Tukwila 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodinville • Yarrow Point <p><u>Local Jurisdictions - Scheduled</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitsap County Public Meeting • Lake Stevens • Marysville • Shoreline • Woodway <p><u>Organizations - Given</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Society of Women Accountants • Cascade Land Conservancy • Community Coalition for Environmental Justice (Seattle and South Seattle) • City of Issaquah Staff • King County Council Committee of the Whole • King County Growth Management Planning Council • King County Staff • Kitsap Regional Coordinating Committee • Pierce County Growth Management Coordinating Committee • Pierce County Regional Planning Council • Port of Seattle • Snohomish County Tomorrow • WA Chapter American Planning Association <p><u>Organizations - Scheduled</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sammamish Rotary <p><u>Environmental Justice Focus Groups - Given</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Seattle - June 3 - Open House/Workshop • Tukwila - June 24 - Open House/Workshop • Silverdale - July 25 - EJ Focus Group • Everett - July 31 - EJ Focus Group <p><u>Environmental Justice - Scheduled</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierce County <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 23rd Draft Environmental Impact Statement Kick-Off <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Status as of August 15, 2006</i></p>



Need to Address Climate Change

"The key question facing PSRC should be "How can the region absorb another 1.6 million people and 1.1 million new jobs by 2040 while protecting the environment and our overall quality of life *in the face of projected changes in regional climate?*"

If the PSRC (and the VISION 2020 Update) is truly to create a regional environmental vision, it must consider both of the major drivers of regional change: regional growth and regional climate change."

-University of Washington Climate Impacts Group

Importance of Housing Affordability

"Housing affordability has a direct impact on the region's growth and economic prosperity...

By placing the same level of importance on housing as is currently given to transportation and environmental impacts, we will be one step closer to achieving responsible growth and long term economic prosperity throughout the Puget Sound region."

- Housing Development Consortium

Need to Preserve Resource Lands

"We commend PSRC for its history of recognizing the importance of resource lands. Preservation of Snohomish County's agricultural, mineral, and forest lands must be supported in the preferred growth alternative.

Care must be taken to not unravel years of work by diverse interest groups to reach agreement that resource lands and uses are a fundamental part of the fabric of Snohomish County and must be protected for current and future generations."

- Executive Reardon, Snohomish County

Value of Environmental Review

"Ecology supports the efforts of PSRC to better integrate environmental issues/planning with land use planning.

We believe understanding and addressing the long-term indirect environmental ramifications of early planning decisions can effectively avoid or reduce many potential indirect and cumulative environmental effects that eventually occur with projects. We believe these effects would be much more difficult to address if thorough environmental analysis only occurs at a project stage."

- Washington State Department of Ecology



Challenge of Growth

"The Commission commends the PSRC on its comprehensive approach and thorough analysis of how the Puget Sound region will grow in the next twenty years [beyond the comprehensive plan], as well as its development of several scenarios of how that growth might be accomplished.

Seeing the ... growth scenarios has given the Commission a new perspective on our challenge as a city to accommodate increases in population and employment."

- Seattle Planning Commission