



Introduction and Background

This chapter discusses the history behind the VISION, describes the regional setting, and discusses the Puget Sound Regional Council. It also outlines the policy context for the VISION, providing an overview of the relationship between the State Growth Management Act and VISION 2040.

Sections in this chapter include the following:

- A. Regional setting.** This section explains the region’s geographic setting, provides information regarding the Regional Council and the State Growth Management Act.
- B. About VISION 2040 and the Multicounty Planning Policies.** This section summarizes VISION 2040 and its multicounty planning policies.
- C. Developing alternatives.** This section discusses how alternatives were developed through public involvement, and how regional geographies were used to guide analysis. The section also described decisions about the four alternatives analyzed in the draft environmental impact statement, the process to develop the preferred growth alternative, and PSRC’s series of issue papers.
- D. The update and environmental process.** This section explains the update framework, the SEPA Environmental process, and the project schedule.
- E. Analysis tools.** This discussion includes an explanation of INDEX (an analysis tool used in the update process), the transportation demand model, the air quality model, and our environmental consultants.

A. Regional Setting

ABOUT THE CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION

Geographic Setting. The central Puget Sound region is made up of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties, and their 82 cities and towns (see Figure 3-1). The major metropolitan cities of the region are Seattle and Bellevue in King County, Bremerton in Kitsap County, Tacoma in Pierce County, and Everett in Snohomish County.

The region’s physical geography is one of its greatest assets, as well as a distinct challenge. Its mountain ranges, waterways, and lush forests and greenery offer a stunningly beautiful natural environment. These features also serve to restrict the region’s developable land area. The region is set in a basin between the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, and is bisected by the salt-water inlets of the Puget Sound and numerous rivers and lakes.



FIGURE 3-1: REGIONAL SETTING, CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION CITIES AND TOWNS



Much of the region's remaining undeveloped land consists of steep hills, environmentally sensitive areas, open space, or preserves and parks, although infill and redevelopment capacity exist within the urban core. Most of the region's other undeveloped land is in rural or natural resource lands outside of the urban growth area. Within the urban area, there are pockets of undeveloped land, as well as lands that could be developed at higher levels.

While the geography imposes additional complexity and expense on infrastructure projects, the physical limits have helped to both frame urbanization and focus growth. The State Growth Management Act reinforces this focus, requiring

both the designation of an urban growth area and the protection and preservation of rural and agricultural lands. Through adopted regional policy, growth is further concentrated into a set of regional growth and manufacturing centers.

Regional Growth and Development. Between 1960 and 2003, the region’s population grew from 1.5 million to 3.4 million. Rapid growth occurred in the late 1960s, in the late 1970s, in the late 1980s, and throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. Over half of the population gain during this period (57 percent) is accounted for by people moving into the region. Eighty-six percent of the population lives within the 980 square miles of the region’s urban growth area. Population projections indicate that by 2040, nearly five million people will be living within the four-county region. There is a direct relationship between the population increase and the growing number of jobs in the metropolitan area. The number, location and types of employment opportunities continue to increase as the economy diversifies.

Economic Structure. Job growth has been a primary driver in the region’s population growth. A strong job market keeps people here and attracts newcomers. The region’s economic base evolved from resource-oriented industries early in this century, to manufacturing-dominated industries, including a strong aerospace sector, after World War II. The employment base in the central Puget Sound region more than doubled in the past 30 years. The region’s economy remains strongly linked to the aerospace sector, but substantially less so than in previous decades. Employment in the services sector, especially high technology, continued to grow rapidly throughout the 1990s. The strong regional economy will continue to contribute to growth pressures in central Puget Sound, and employment projections indicate that by 2040, there will be about three million jobs in the four-county region.

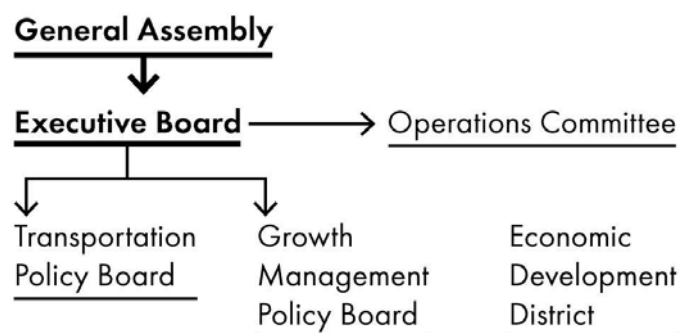
By effectively planning for this growth, the region has the opportunity to support future economic vitality and environmental health, provide adequate transportation systems and other infrastructure, and help manage costs of doing business and providing public services. All of these things contribute to the region’s reputation as a uniquely attractive place to live and work — a distinction critical to the region’s economic success.

ABOUT THE PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Puget Sound Regional Council is the growth management, transportation, and economic planning agency for the central Puget Sound region of Washington State. It serves as a forum for cities, counties, ports, transit agencies, tribes, and the state to work together on important regional issues.

A General Assembly and Executive Board govern the Regional Council. The Growth Management, and Transportation Policy Boards advise the Executive Board. The General Assembly is composed of all member jurisdictions and agencies. The Assembly meets at least annually to review and vote on key issues such as the annual budget, new officers, and growth management and transportation plans and policies.

FIGURE 3-2: PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



The Executive Board meets monthly and carries out delegated powers and responsibilities between meetings of the General Assembly. The Board is chaired by the Regional Council’s President.

The Growth Management Policy Board and the Transportation Policy Board meet monthly and include representatives of Regional Council member jurisdictions, as well as representatives of regional business, labor, civic, and environmental groups. These boards make recommendations on key issues to the Executive Board, including decisions about the VISION Update.



The Regional Council supports the work of the region’s Economic Development District. The Economic Development District coordinates economic development planning in the region, and is governed by a Board of Directors composed of representatives of the region’s cities, ports, tribes, business/institutions, and citizen appointees.

Key responsibilities of the Regional Council include:

- Long Range Growth, Economic, and Transportation Planning
- Transportation Funding
- Economic Development Coordination
- Regional Data
- Technical Assistance
- Certification of Local Comprehensive Plans’ Transportation Element

The Regional Council is designated under state law as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, and under federal law as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the central Puget Sound region. PSRC also supports the region’s federally designated Economic Development District. PSRC has specific planning responsibilities under federal and state laws, including the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act — a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the federal Clean Air Act, the state Growth Management Act the state Clean Air Washington Act, and the federal Public Works Act, as well as responsibilities pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement and Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement, as signed by its members.

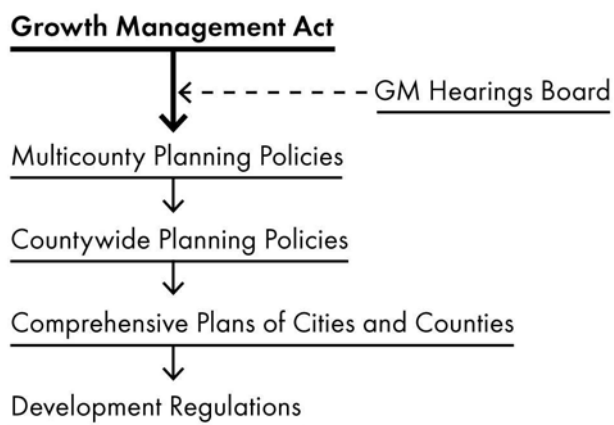
ABOUT THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The Growth Management Act

Public policy to protect the environment and the high quality of life in the State of Washington has evolved during the last 30 years in response to increased growth and on-going development. The first major steps were taken in 1971 with the passage of the State Environmental Policy Act, followed by the Shoreline Management Act. During the 1980s several individual jurisdictions, including King County, engaged in a new generation of comprehensive planning in an attempt to manage growth. In 1990 and 1991 the Washington Legislature passed, and Governor Booth Gardner signed, the Growth Management Act to mandate local comprehensive planning in heavily populated and high growth areas of the state.

The Growth Management Act establishes broad goals, such as managing urban growth, protecting agricultural, forestry, and environmentally sensitive areas, reducing sprawl, and encouraging efficient multi-modal transportation systems. VISION 2020, which contains the region's Growth Management Act mandated multicounty planning policies, provides a regional framework for achieving these goals, by building on and supporting local, county, regional, and state planning efforts. The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2020 reflect broad directions agreed to by member jurisdictions and agencies that, in general, will be implemented through local comprehensive and agency plans. These policies are designed to assist the region in managing growth in ways that optimize the movement of goods and people, protect the environment, revitalize communities, and develop a healthy economy.

FIGURE 3-3: GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT PLANNING RELATIONSHIPS



Local Comprehensive Plans

The Growth Management Act requires that all jurisdictions in the central Puget Sound region develop comprehensive plans. Unless a plan is challenged and appealed to a Growth Management Hearings Board, the plan is presumed to be valid and consistent with statewide planning requirements. The Regional Council is required to review local jurisdictions' plans and amendments and certify that they comply with the Growth Management Act, and are consistent with regional guidelines and principles for planning (meaning that they are consistent with both VISION 204 and *Destination 2030*). Certification establishes eligibility for transportation funding available under the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. Of the 86 adopted plans in the region, the Regional Council has certified the transportation provisions of 83.

B. About VISION 2040 and the multicounty planning policies

WHAT IS VISION 2040

VISION 2040 serves as integrated long-range growth management, economic and transportation strategy for King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties and their respective cities and towns. VISION 2040 contains the region's updated multicounty planning policies, which are required by the Washington State Growth Management Act. VISION 2040 continues to provide a comprehensive regional approach to manage growth through the year 2040.

VISION 2040 is long-range and addresses a larger and complex geography than that of a single local jurisdiction. It is not simply a bigger version of a local comprehensive plan. While the relationship of VISION 2040 to local plan is mutually reinforcing, the regional plan plays the role of portraying the larger picture. VISION 2040 provides a benefit to localities by creating a common planning context. In turn, the local plan offers the details and specifics for implementation, including fiscal, infrastructure, and capacity analyses. It is appropriate for local level planning to be more detailed and address specific local issues.

The draft VISION 2040 builds on the 1995 version of VISION 2020. Some of the key elements of the VISION 2040 are a numeric regional growth strategy to achieve closer balance between jobs and housing within the counties and regional geographies, more effective guidance for distributing growth to urban growth areas, more explicitly address focusing growth into cities, minimizing rural development, distinguishing between different roles of regional geographies, and supporting growth in designated regional and subregional centers. For population, the VISION 2040 calls for more growth in cities with regional growth centers and in larger cities, and for minimizing rural growth. For employment, VISION 2040 calls for continuing the current locally-adopted policies for employment growth which emphasize a concentrated regional pattern with a focus on centers.

VISION 2040 contains ***Multicounty Planning Policies*** organized around six policy topic areas. The policies are guided by a set of goals, and each category contains implementation actions and monitoring measures. The policy categories, and the number of policies in each, are as follows:

1. **General:** 5 *policies*.
2. **Environment:** 25 *policies*.
3. **Development Patterns:** 56 *policies*.
4. **Housing:** 9 *policies*.
5. **Economy:** 22 *policies*.
6. **Transportation:** 33 *policies*.
7. **Public Services:** 24 *policies*.

The policies are presented in VISION 2040; a discussion of the policies is provided in *Chapter II.7* of this document.



A new feature in VISION 2040 is a numeric **Preferred Growth Alternative**. The Preferred Growth Alternative is not an attempt to forecast growth or establish local targets; rather, it is meant to establish regional guidance for a preferred way for the region's cities, towns, and unincorporated areas to grow. With the development of the Preferred Growth Alternative, the multicounty planning policies can now be structured and aligned to better implement VISION 2040.

As with the original VISION in 1990, the update is meant to identify a preferred way to grow, and respond to the Growth Management Act requirement to plan for growth. The question is, “*what is the preferred way to accommodate 1.6 million more people and 1.1 million new jobs while maintaining our quality of life?*”

The structure of the preferred growth alternative is at the regional geographies level, which includes metropolitan cities, core cities, larger cities, small cities, unincorporated areas, and rural areas. For each of these geographies, the preferred growth alternative provides guidance at the regional and county levels. For analysis purpose, the preferred growth alternative was "painted" at the 5.5 acre grid cell level, which was then aggregated to the forecast analysis zone level (see *Appendix I-E* for more information). These levels will **not** be adopted as part of the preferred growth alternative, and served only as technical inputs to support model runs and the environmental review.

How does the Preferred Growth Alternative Relate to the VISION 2040 Regional Growth Strategy and Multicounty Planning Policies

VISION 2040's growth strategy is comprised of two parts. First is a **growth concept** that builds on the foundation provided in VISION 2020, emphasizing the role of the urban growth area and urban centers in accommodating future population and employment. The second part contains **specific guidance** for the distribution of growth to regional geographies. The growth concept fits within the regional geographies framework, with growth focused into the urban growth area and into centers of different sizes and scales in all cities.

This Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement analyzes the specific guidance for a growth pattern contained in the Preferred Growth Alternative. It is referred to as the Preferred Growth Alternative (or PGA in the figures) in the environmental review to ensure that it is analyzed and considered in a manner consistent with the four alternatives that were included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was released in May 2006.

The multicounty planning policies are designed to implement the Preferred Growth Alternative, and the potential impacts and potential mitigation measures of the Preferred Growth Alternative are discussed in the sub-sections of *Chapter II - Section 5: Environmental Effect and Mitigation*.

As the primary policy statements for implementing the regional growth strategy, the multicounty planning policies have been designed to support the concentration of growth within the region's designated urban growth area and to limit development in resource and rural areas. The multicounty planning policies provide an integrated framework for addressing land use, economic development, transportation, other infrastructure, and environmental planning.

The multicounty planning policies and Preferred Growth Alternative also guide countywide planning policies and local jurisdiction comprehensive plans, thereby helping to ensure that other planning documents are consistent the Preferred Growth Alternative (see *Chapter II - Section 7: Discussion of Multicounty Planning Policies*).

C. Developing Alternatives

Phase One focused on identification of growth distribution alternatives for analysis in the environmental impact statement and pre-EIS research (issue papers). The Growth Management Policy Board and the Regional Staff Committee met monthly to advise and provide direction to the Regional Council staff. PSRC staff also conducted wide ranging outreach efforts to interest groups, county planning directors, and countywide staff and elected groups. Through this process, they established a series of key assumptions to guide the update and environmental review. PSRC also used these assumptions to help identify alternatives to be included in the EIS.

ASSUMPTIONS GUIDING THE VISION 2040 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

- **Forecasts.** The update focuses on the region’s long-range VISION to accommodate continued growth through the year 2040 and beyond. The alternatives are based on the same regional forecasts for population and employment growth through the year 2040. These forecasts, based on widely accepted practices, anticipate a year 2040 regional population of 4,988,000 and 3,047,000 jobs.
- **Build on the Current VISION.** In order to comply with the objectives and mandates of the state Growth Management Act and to fulfill the purpose and need for action, the update builds on the base of the policies and strategies adopted in VISION 2020. The focus of the update will be to clarify aspects of the VISION, emphasize efficiency, establish priorities, and reinforce the concept of a common purpose for the region’s many stakeholders. The VISION continues to reflect the Growth Management Act’s objectives of containing the expansion of urban areas, conserving farmlands, forests, and open spaces, supporting more compact, people-oriented living and working places, and focuses a significant amount of new employment and housing into cities with vibrant urban centers.
- **Transportation Plan.** The growth distribution alternatives are being analyzed to see (among other things) which is best served by the existing transportation plan. In a separate planned action that will follow the selection of a preferred VISION, Destination 2030 will be extended to 2040 and amended to address the preferred growth alternative in March 2008.

USING REGIONAL GEOGRAPHIES TO GUIDE THE ANALYSIS

The Regional Council identified the region’s cities, towns, unincorporated urban growth areas, and rural areas as the basic units of analysis for distribution of population and employment within regional growth scenarios. This approach was taken in part because cities bear the primary responsibility of implementing the Growth Management Act and the regional VISION at the local level through locally adopted land use plans and development regulations.

The region was also divided for analysis purposes into seven separate geographic categories, based on current incorporated boundaries, population and employment, adopted urban growth areas, and current thinking about the variety of roles that these different types of cities might play in the region’s future.

These regional geographies were used to develop the alternatives and to distribute future population and employment growth. More information on the alternatives and regional geographies is provided in *Chapter 4 – the Definition of Alternatives*.

SELECTION OF INITIAL FOUR GROWTH ALTERNATIVES FOR EIS REVIEW

PSRC’s Growth Management Policy Board took action on September 8, 2005 to identify the alternatives to be included in the VISION Draft EIS. The alternatives were selected in response to suggestions made during the comment period and reflected the following considerations to help narrow and refine the alternatives to be included in the EIS:

- The most extreme scenarios should not be further considered.
- The alternatives have been designed so that they represent regional growth patterns that are highly distinct from one another and represent a wide range of choices.
- A “No Action” alternative is to be defined as the continuation of currently adopted growth targets, with the targets extended to 2040 to match PSRC’s regional growth forecasts. The land use patterns and distribution of regional growth seen in current comprehensive plans and local growth targets represent currently adopted public policy, which would continue if no action were taken to alter the current regional vision. While recent growth trends have resulted in a larger share of regional growth in King County than is envisioned in current targets, commenters felt that in the future the distribution of growth among the regional geographies will correspond more closely with currently adopted targets.
- Two of the alternatives represent a wider distribution of population and employment between the four counties than current conditions, while two represent greater concentration than current conditions.
- The alternatives include a pattern that is more highly focused than current comprehensive plans and one in which growth is less focused than current comprehensive plans.



- While the overall amount of forecast growth in the region does not change, it has been redistributed in the alternatives to reflect possible future growth patterns.
- The differences between cities and how they grow were taken into consideration when distributing population and employment. To distribute within each geographic class (i.e., Metropolitan Cities, Core Cities, etc.), each city's share of geographic class growth in the alternatives is based on the ratio of the jurisdiction's targets compared to the geographic class total growth forecast for the 2022-2025 time period. These ratios are then applied to the class share of growth in each alternative.
- Growth in the rural area has been minimized for center-focused alternatives.
- Currently designated UGAs have been maintained in the alternatives. Specific changes to the UGA may or may not occur in the urban growth area in the future, and decisions on expanding urban growth areas are made at the county level. Therefore, for the purposes of the regional VISION, PSRC has focused the analysis on what it would take for existing designated urban areas to accommodate anticipated growth. PSRC also expects that the effects of UGA changes, if they are to be proposed, could be addressed through the overall EIS process.

The following table summarizes key dates associated with the identification of alternatives.

FIGURE 3-4: KEY PUBLIC REVIEW DATES ASSOCIATED WITH IDENTIFICATION OF ALTERNATIVES

December 9, 2004.....	The Growth Management Policy Board was introduced to INDEX, a new geographic information system-based sketch planning tool, its capabilities, and how it would be used in the development of scenarios and alternatives.
January 19, 2005	The Regional Technical Forum was introduced to INDEX, its capabilities, and how it would be used in the development of scenarios and alternatives.
January 27, 2005	The Regional Staff Committee was introduced to INDEX, its capabilities, and how it would be used in the development of scenarios and alternatives.
February 23, 2005.....	The Regional Council conducted a half-day workshop on INDEX for board members, regional staff and interested parties. Comments on INDEX assumptions, scenario design, and indicator output were collected.
May 18, 2005	Regional Council staff met with the UrbanSim Technical Advisory Committee to review INDEX indicators, assumptions, and draft scenarios. Comments on INDEX assumptions, scenario design, and indicator output were collected.
May 20, 2005	INDEX and the first five scenarios were reviewed and discussed as part of a regional VISION 2020 workshop. Comments on INDEX assumptions, scenario design, and indicator output were collected.
June 16, 2005	The Regional Council conducted a half-day workshop on INDEX to review, discuss, and take comment on a group of 8 scenarios. Comments on INDEX assumptions and scenario design were collected.
July 14, 2005.....	The Growth Management Policy Board was introduced to the group of 8 scenarios for review and comment. Comments on INDEX assumptions and scenario design were collected. The Transportation Policy Board was briefed on the VISION 2020 Update decision-making schedule and framework.
July 21, 2005.....	The Regional Staff Committee was introduced to the group of 8 scenarios for review and comment. Comments on INDEX assumptions and scenario design were collected.
August 11, 2005.....	The Growth Management Policy Board convened an Ad Hoc Committee to review and comment on a staff recommendation of four alternatives developed out of the eight scenarios. Comments on assumptions and alternative design were collected. The committee suggested some minor modifications, and expressed general support for the staff recommendation.
August 18, 2005.....	The Regional Staff Committee was introduced to a staff recommendation of four alternatives developed out of the eight scenarios. Comments on assumptions and alternative design were collected. The committee expressed support for the staff recommendation.
August 25, 2005.....	The Growth Management Policy Board was introduced to a staff recommendation of four alternatives developed out of the eight scenarios. The board expressed support for the staff recommendation.
September 8, 2005.....	The Growth Management Policy approved four growth distribution alternatives for review in the Environmental Impact Statement process.

HOW WAS THE PREFERRED GROWTH ALTERNATIVE SELECTED

The Regional Council's Growth Management Policy Board has led the process to develop VISION 2040, in coordination with other Regional Council boards and committees. The Board is comprised of elected officials from throughout the four county region and non-voting representatives from interest groups.

The Growth Management Policy Board makes recommendations to the Regional Council's Executive Board. The Regional Council's General Assembly, which consists of all council and commission members from member jurisdictions in the four-county region, will make the final decision on VISION 2040.

Between May 2006 and March 2007, following the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Growth Management Policy Board used four tools to develop the Preferred Growth Alternative: (1) the findings in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, (2) input received during a public review and comment period, (3) staff analysis on a potential Preferred Growth Alternative, which included input from a technical advisory group made up of local jurisdiction staff, and (4) application of the evaluation criteria for selecting a Preferred Growth Alternative that was published in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. These are described below.

First Public Review and Comment Period

The extended public comment period on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement began on May 31, 2006 and ended on July 31, 2006. The Regional Council received letters from jurisdictions representing over 70 percent of the region's population. Staff reviewed the comment letters that were submitted in the period and developed a report for review by Policy Board members that provided an overview of the outreach process, described who submitted the letters, and identified the key issues that were raised.

Overall, the comments demonstrated a solid level of agreement that the region should grow in a focused and coordinated manner, and should pursue a Preferred Growth Alternative that is based on a focused growth pattern. 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 alternatives.

At its September 2006 meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board took action to instruct Regional Council staff to apply the report's findings and conclusions to the development of a Preferred Growth Alternative (see *FEIS Appendices - Appendix II-C: Summary of Public Review and Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement*).

Results of Evaluation Criteria

Between September 2005 and January 2006, the Growth Management Policy Board developed a framework for evaluating the alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and then refined the framework to serve as evaluation criteria. As approved by the Policy Board, the criteria were included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In summer 2006, Regional Council staff prepared a report that applied the evaluation criteria to the alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

While the Draft Environmental Impact Statement acknowledged that tradeoffs exist among the alternatives, the application of the evaluation criteria found that some alternatives fare significantly better than others in terms of meeting the criteria. For a few measures, the analysis found that growth distribution does not matter. However, for most of the measures, growth distribution does seem to matter, and the focused growth alternatives provided the most promising results.

At its September 2006 meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board took action to instruct Regional Council staff to apply the evaluation criteria to a preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative (see *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-D: Evaluation Criteria*).

Staff Analysis of the draft Preferred Growth Alternative

Using the guidance from the Policy Board, the public review and comment period, as well as from the application of the evaluation criteria, staff developed a draft Preferred Growth Alternative for a focused regional growth pattern that represents a hybrid of the Metropolitan Cities and Larger Cities alternatives. The draft Preferred Growth Alternative was evaluated by a technical advisory group composed of staff from around the region. This group met over the summer of 2006, and used a series of technical evaluation measures, such as economic sector forecasts and growth target projections. Discussion and analysis led them to develop a preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative that they judged to be both reasonable and ambitious (see *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-A: Recommended Preferred Growth Alternative: Technical Tables*).



The draft Preferred Growth Alternative was introduced to the Growth Management Policy Board and discussed at its September 2006 meeting. At its October 2006 meeting, the Board took action to advance the draft Preferred Growth Alternative as a preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative.

As part of the action, Regional Council staff was instructed to conduct initial sensitivity tests and model the performance of the preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative to provide additional information for the Growth Management Policy Board to review and consider at its January 2007 meeting for potential action in February 2007.

Initial Evaluation of Preferred Growth Alternative

The purpose of the initial evaluation was to provide additional information to the Policy Board about how the preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative performed relative to the four alternatives evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Based on an initial evaluation of 12 initial criteria measures, the preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative performed well when compared to the other alternatives. The preliminary Preferred Growth Alternative fared particularly well in Land Use measures, addresses job/housing balance measures, is strong in transportation measures, and seemed to provide many of the benefits of the focused growth Metropolitan Cities and Larger Cities alternatives. All of this initial evaluation is contained in the evaluation criteria (see *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-D: Evaluation Criteria*).

Release of Recommended Preferred Growth Alternative

Based on the initial evaluation and all of the information provided, in February 2007 the Policy Board made a recommendation to the Executive Board to release the Preferred Growth Alternative for full analysis alongside the other alternatives in this Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Executive Board took action in March 2007 to release the Preferred Growth Alternative for full analysis and for public review and comment in the summer of 2007.

FINALIZATION OF THE PREFERRED GROWTH ALTERNATIVE AND VISION 2040

Public Comment Period

Following the release of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement PSRC conducted a public comment period on the draft VISION 2040 document and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement from July 16 through September 7. During this time, a total of 175 letters were received, containing nearly 2,000 discrete comments.

At this stage in the VISION 2040 process, written public comment is the primary tool being used by the Puget Sound Regional Council's boards and committee as they work to finalize the VISION. The prominence of the written public comments is based on the agreement by the Growth Management Policy Board in June 2007 that all substantive edits to the draft VISION 2040 must be in response to written public comment.

To facilitate the review of public comment by the Regional Council's boards and other interested parties, all of the comment letters were numbered and placed in binders for public review. 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. Also, electronically scanned versions of all of the submittals were posted on the Regional Council's website.

Board and Committee Reviews

In September and October 2007, the Regional Council's Regional Staff Committee (a group made up of planning, public works, and community development directors) held three special meetings to review major issues addressed in the comments. At these meetings, Regional Staff Committee members worked with Regional Council staff to develop recommendations for how to address the more substantive items raised in the public comments.

The Regional Staff Committee's recommendations were presented and discussed at a two-day special Growth Management Policy Board ad hoc committee meeting on October 25 and 26. At this ad-hoc meeting, Growth Management Policy Board members were joined by Economic Development District Board members as well as members of the Transportation Policy Board.

At its November meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board reviewed the work of the ad hoc committee meeting, and also reviewed a set of less substantive proposed edits to the draft VISION 2040.

Board Actions

At their December meetings, the Transportation Policy Board and Economic Development District Boards took an action to forward their respective sets of recommended edits to the Growth Management Policy Board.

Following the board meetings, three Public Hearings were held on December 18; the locations of the hearings were Auburn City Hall, Edmonds City Hall, and the Kitsap County Administration Building. The purpose of the public hearings was to communicate with the public prior to final Board actions on VISION 2040 in early 2008.

In January, the Growth Management Policy Board's ad hoc committee and full membership reviewed a strike-through version of VISION 2040, prior to making a recommendation to the PSRC Executive Board on the final wording of the document.

In March 2008, the Executive Board recommended the final VISION 2040 package to the General Assembly for action in April 2008.

D. VISION 2040 Environmental Review and Public Outreach Process

THRESHOLD DETERMINATION

In October 2003 the Regional Council, the lead agency for the update and environmental review, determined that population and employment growth associated with extending VISION 2020 to 2040 would likely result in environmental impacts that need to be documented and mitigated. The Regional Council issued a Determination of Significance, pursuant to SEPA — RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c).

The Determination of Significance marked the beginning of an extended public outreach and scoping process that began in October 2003 and extended to March 2004. Public outreach included a variety of methods, including a public opinion survey, workshops, public open houses, presentations to a diverse set of stakeholders, and more.

INITIAL SCOPING PERIOD

During the 5-month comment period, the PSRC received comments raising more than 1,200 points, and agency staff had contact with over 2,000 individuals, organizations, and local jurisdictions throughout the region. The scoping process was the most rigorous that the Regional Council has conducted. This expanded scoping process provided ample time to listen to Regional Council members, affected agencies, interest groups, tribes, and members of the general public in order to establish the scope of the update.

All comments were transcribed and entered into a scoping database and summarized in a scoping report. The scoping report documented the efforts and results of the outreach and planning, including public comments.

In July 2004, the PSRC Executive Board adopted the VISION 2020 update project scoping report, and set in motion a major effort to update the VISION. The Executive Board directed PSRC the VISION to be updated and extended to the year 2040. The Regional Council's Growth Management Policy Board took the lead in developing the update. The Growth Management Policy Board was assisted by the Regional Council staff and by the Council's Regional Staff Committee (which is comprised of planning, economic development, and public works officials from throughout the region). The Growth Management Policy Board also worked with the Transportation Policy Board and the Economic Development District Board to make recommendations to the Executive Board.

EARLY EIS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

PSRC conducted pre-EIS research that resulted in 10 issue papers. The 25 broad areas of interest identified in the scoping process were consolidated by the Growth Management Policy Board to form the topics covered by the 10 papers. The issue papers took the concepts identified in scoping and turned them into concrete proposals for consideration in the update.

The issue papers were developed incrementally over the year. The Growth Management Policy Board and the Regional Staff Committee reviewed and worked on each paper over several meetings. The papers were featured at a May 2005



Public Event, that also introduced the future growth scenarios that became the basis for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement alternatives. All of the issue papers are found in *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-F*.

The issue papers included:

- **Housing.** An overview of housing issues and trends, with special attention given to projected demographics and potential housing needs in the year 2040. Covers innovations in providing housing, including an examination of affordable housing.
- **Environment.** An assessment of the current state of information and resources for environmental planning at the regional level. Considers the human impacts, trends, indicators, and implications for a variety of environmental factors, including water, air, land, and wildlife. Two supplemental papers were developed on Sewer Utilities and Energy.
- **Social and Environmental Justice.** Documentation of PSRC regional environmental justice research, with an examination of issues and needs of various population groups in the region, particularly minority and low-income groups.
- **Health.** An overview of how health provisions — including active living, safety, and environmental quality — can be better integrated into regional policy and planning.
- **Demographics.** A description of current growth trends, along with population issues that are likely to be in play in the year 2040.
- **Growth Targets.** An examination of the various processes used to assign growth targets to the region's counties and their municipalities, and how these processes might be improved.
- **Economics.** An examination of key employment issues, with attention given to work of the region's Prosperity Partnership and its efforts to maintain existing jobs and create new ones in strategic economic clusters.
- **Subregional Centers.** An examination of locations other than the designated regional growth centers and the potential roles these places could play in accommodating significant portions of the population and employment growth anticipated by the year 2040.
- **Transportation.** Information about the strengths and weaknesses of the current transportation system in the region. A number of transportation issues are discussed to help define how transportation improvements can support and implement the VISION 2020 growth strategy and economic development efforts.
- **Rural Areas.** A study of major issues of importance in the rural portions of the region, looking especially at their long-term viability and protection.

Each of these papers were reviewed by the Growth Management Policy Board. That Board took an action-to-proceed to advance the papers for public review and to be used in subsequent phases of the update process. For more information on the issue papers, see *Chapter 7 – Evaluation of Multicounty Planning Policies*.

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND FIRST PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

Following the process to develop growth distribution alternatives (see *section C* on previous pages), PSRC staff and its environmental consultants developed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Released in May 2006, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement marked an important milestone. In it, PSRC provided a detailed definition of four conceptual regional growth alternatives through the year 2040. This definition allowed the region to assess the magnitude of growth considered in all the alternatives, review the potential environmental effects of distributing growth in the region, evaluate mitigation efforts, and indicate a preference for an alternative. Following the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, PSRC conducted a public comment period (for more information, see *section C* on previous pages.)

SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND SECOND PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

Following the process to develop the preferred growth alternative (see *section C* on previous pages), PSRC staff and its environmental consultants developed a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. In the Supplemental, the Preferred Growth Alternative was analyzed alongside the four initial conceptual alternatives. (for more information, see *section C* on previous pages.) Accompanying the Supplemental was a draft VISION document. The draft VISION 2040 contains the numeric preferred growth strategy, and proposed updates to the multicounty planning policies. Both documents were released for a second public review and comment period in the summer of 2007.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Following the public review period for the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, PSRC's boards worked with staff and consultants to incorporate changes, finalize the preferred growth alternative, and publish the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Included with the Final Environmental Impact Statement are all the comments received as part of the public comment periods for the Draft and Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statements, as well as a full response to all comments.

E. Analysis Tools

To develop alternatives and support the EIS analysis, PSRC uses a suite of analytical tools for long-range planning. These are discussed briefly below, and in greater detail in *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-E: Overview of Key Models and Data*. Also, to select a preferred growth alternative, the Growth Management Policy Board used a set of Evaluation Criteria - these are described at the end of the section, and in greater detail in *FEIS Appendices - Appendix I-D: Evaluation Criteria*.)

INDEX — PAINT THE REGION

At the outset of the VISION 2020 project, the PSRC recognized the value a new sketch-planning tool would add in helping decision makers consider various growth scenarios and select alternatives for evaluation in an environmental impact statement.

INDEX is software that works within a Geographic Information System, allowing the user to “paint” a variety of land uses in a neighborhood or region, and then evaluate the impacts of changes that are made.

Within INDEX, PSRC defined a custom set of land use categories that correspond with local comprehensive plan designations. Each land use category carries with it set population and employment values. Through the application of these land use categories, the user simulates the end state of development in an area.

PSRC next defined a variety of regional growth scenarios based on distribution among broad classes of cities and other regional geographies.

The INDEX tool was used to paint these regional scenarios.

TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL

EMME/2 is the modeling software used by PSRC to run the regional travel demand model. The travel demand model currently employs the traditional four-step modeling process (trip generation, trip distribution, mode choice, assignment).

The travel model uses demographic, employment, and land use inputs. These are combined with travel survey data to generate trips used as demand. The trips are paired up in the trip distribution process (destination choice model for work-trips, gravity model for non-work trips). The mode choice model determines the mode of travel for each trip and the time-of-day model allocates trips to the five time periods. Finally the assignment process uses shortest path algorithms iteratively to load the networks.



A vehicle availability model and a time-of-day model are included. Five time periods are modeled overall (two time periods for transit trips) with seven vehicle types (Single Occupant Vehicle [SOV], High Occupancy Vehicle with two occupants [HOV2], High Occupancy Vehicle with three or more occupants [HOV3+], Vanpool, Light Truck, Medium Truck, Heavy Truck) as well as bus, ferry, rail, and non-motorized modes. Resulting performance measures include daily and peak period traffic volumes, congested speeds/times, mode splits, origins/destinations, trips by purpose and Volume-to-Capacity ratios among others.

AIR QUALITY MODEL

The process for estimating regional air quality involves the integration of the Regional Council's land use and travel demand modeling with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's MOBILE 6.2 vehicle emissions modeling software. The air quality analysis is based on the most recent population and employment forecasts. The modeling process and results are coordinated with the Regional Council's air quality partner agencies.