



# VISION 2050

A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region



# Puget Sound Regional Council

## Membership

### COUNTIES

King County ■ Kitsap County ■ Pierce County ■ Snohomish County

### CITIES & TRIBES

Algona ■ Arlington ■ Auburn ■ Bainbridge Island ■ Beaux Arts Village ■ Bellevue ■ Black Diamond ■ Bonney Lake ■ Bothell ■ Bremerton ■ Buckley ■ Burien ■ Carnation ■ Clyde Hill ■ Covington ■ Darrington ■ Des Moines ■ DuPont ■ Duvall ■ Eatonville ■ Edgewood ■ Edmonds ■ Enumclaw ■ Everett ■ Federal Way ■ Fife ■ Fircrest ■ Gig Harbor ■ Granite Falls ■ Hunts Point ■ Issaquah ■ Kenmore ■ Kent ■ Kirkland ■ Lake Forest Park ■ Lake Stevens ■ Lakewood ■ Lynnwood ■ Maple Valley ■ Marysville ■ Medina ■ Mercer Island ■ Mill Creek ■ Milton ■ Monroe ■ Mountlake Terrace ■ Muckleshoot Indian Tribe ■ Mukilteo ■ Newcastle ■ Normandy Park ■ North Bend ■ Orting ■ Pacific ■ Port Orchard ■ Poulsbo ■ Puyallup ■ Puyallup Tribe of Indians ■ Redmond ■ Renton ■ Roy ■ Ruston ■ Sammamish ■ SeaTac ■ Seattle ■ Shoreline ■ Skykomish ■ Snohomish ■ Snoqualmie ■ Stanwood ■ Steilacoom ■ Sultan ■ Sumner ■ Tacoma ■ The Suquamish Tribe ■ Tukwila ■ Tulalip Tribes ■ University Place ■ Wilkeson ■ Woodinville ■ Woodway ■ Yarrow Point ■

### STATUTORY MEMBERS

Port of Bremerton ■ Port of Everett ■ Port of Seattle ■ Port of Tacoma ■ Washington State Department of Transportation ■ Washington Transportation Commission ■

### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Alderwood Water & Wastewater District ■ Cascade Water Alliance ■ Port of Edmonds ■ Island County ■ Puget Sound Partnership ■ Snoqualmie Tribe ■ Thurston Regional Planning Council ■ University of Washington ■ Washington State University ■

### TRANSIT AGENCIES

Community Transit ■ Everett Transit ■ Kitsap Transit ■ Metro (King County) ■ Pierce Transit ■ Sound Transit

### American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information:

Individuals requiring reasonable accommodations may request written materials in alternate formats, sign language interpreters, physical accessibility accommodations, or other reasonable accommodations by contacting the ADA Coordinator, Thu Le, at 206-464-6175, with two weeks' advance notice. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may contact the ADA Coordinator, Thu Le, through TTY Relay 711.

Funding for this document provided in part by member jurisdictions, grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation.

**Title VI Notice:** PSRC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, visit <https://www.psrc.org/titlevi>.

### Language Assistance

For language assistance, visit <https://www.psrc.org/contact-center/language-assistance>.

العربية | Arabic, 中文 | Chinese, Deutsch | German, Français | French, 한국어 | Korean, Русский | Russian, Español | Spanish, Tagalog, Tiếng Việt | Vietnamese

Additional copies of this document may be obtained by contacting:

Puget Sound Regional Council • Information Center  
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500  
Seattle, Washington 98104-1035  
206-464-7532 • [info@psrc.org](mailto:info@psrc.org) • [psrc.org](http://psrc.org)





# Resolution PSRC-A-2020-02

## **A RESOLUTION of the Puget Sound Regional Council Adopting VISION 2050**

**WHEREAS**, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is designated by the governor of the State of Washington, under federal and state laws, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the central Puget Sound region encompassing King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties; and

**WHEREAS**, as the MPO and RTPO for the four-county region, PSRC has responsibilities under federal and state laws, including the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (23 CFR Part 450 Subpart C (FHWA) and 49 CFR Part 613, Subpart A (FTA)), the Federal Clean Air Act (42 USC Section 7401-7671q), the Washington Clean Air Act (RCW 70.94.37), the state Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A), and related RTPO planning provisions (RCW 47.80); and

**WHEREAS**, the Interlocal Agreement signed by all PSRC members establishes the agency as a forum for collaborative work on regional growth management and transportation planning and other issues requiring regional coordination and cooperation, including maintaining the adopted regional growth strategy that addresses regional issues including transportation, open space, air and water quality, economic development, and regional facilities, as well as producing the regional transportation plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington Administrative Code 365-196-305 recommends that multicounty planning policies should use an existing regional agency, such as the RTPO, to develop, adopt, and administer the multicounty planning policies; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1992, PSRC was affirmed as the agency responsible for meeting the Growth Management Act requirement for multicounty planning policies, and the agency adopted the 1990 VISION 2020 policies as the multicounty planning policies; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1993, PSRC adopted revised multicounty planning policies; and in 1995 adopted the VISION 2020 Update pursuant to the above referenced responsibilities and functions; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2008, PSRC adopted VISION 2040 with revised multicounty planning policies pursuant to the above referenced responsibilities and functions; and

**WHEREAS**, the PSRC Executive Board initiated the update of VISION 2040 in December 2017 with direction to build on the work of VISION 2040; to be an ambitious strategy for the region; to work towards realizing the goals of VISION 2040; to reflect the diversity of the region; and to make VISION more accessible and usable; and

**WHEREAS**, the central Puget Sound region is forecast to reach a population of about 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs by the year 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, PSRC issued a Determination of Significance for the update of VISION 2040 under the State Environmental Policy Act and engaged in formal integrated scoping for the planning process and environmental review, which concluded with the Growth Management Policy Board's approval of the VISION 2050 Scoping Report in June 2018; and

**WHEREAS**, PSRC prepared a Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for VISION 2050 pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act that considered a range of growth alternatives, and which supplements the VISION 2040 Final Environmental Impact Statement (2008); and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with federal and state mandates, the Growth Management Policy Board recommended a draft VISION 2050 document to reflect and incorporate planning work in the region completed under the Growth Management Act; to refine the multicounty planning policies to address important common issues and areas of regional agreement affecting growth management, the environment, the economy, and transportation; to establish new implementing actions to continue progress in achieving the regional VISION to the year 2050; and to establish monitoring efforts to evaluate the extent to which the regional VISION is being achieved; and

**WHEREAS**, the Growth Management Policy Board considered the analysis of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS); technical reports prepared by staff; comments submitted during scoping, the Draft SEIS review, and the draft plan review; and conducted deliberative discussions to develop VISION 2050 and recommends its adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the Executive Board considered the recommendation of the Growth Management Policy Board, the engagement process and comments on the draft plan, the technical analysis, the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and deliberative discussion that led to the formation of the plan and recommends adoption of VISION 2050; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Growth Strategy, related provisions, and Executive Board amendments to the final recommended VISION 2050 fall within the range of alternatives analyzed in the Draft and Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act; and

**WHEREAS**, VISION 2050 is necessary to provide future land use assumptions and a common framework for the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Regional Economic Strategy, as well as countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans; and

**WHEREAS**, consistent with federal and state mandates, state environmental requirements, and with the PSRC's Interlocal Agreement, Public Participation Plan and other operating procedures, PSRC has worked with local, state and federal jurisdictions and agencies in a continuing, cooperative and detailed planning process; it has made supporting materials available for public review, conducted public hearings, surveys, workshops, open houses, and other efforts, including providing extensive data and information related to the update on the PSRC website, in order to involve agencies, communities, businesses, interest groups, and individuals to provide input, discussion and review of VISION 2050 and its related Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement; and it has incorporated in these documents the work of local governments and other member agencies, as well as the comments of individuals, businesses, tribes, and interests throughout the region; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Puget Sound Regional Council General Assembly adopts VISION 2050 as the growth management, environmental, economic, and transportation vision for the central Puget Sound region, meeting state Growth Management

Act and State Environmental Policy Act requirements, and in so doing reaffirms its commitment to an integrated regional approach to growth management, the environment, the economy, and transportation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that VISION 2050 supersedes VISION 2040 (2008).

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that VISION 2050 supersedes the Growing Transit Communities Strategy as the regional equitable transit-oriented development strategy pursuant to RCW 81.112.350.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the General Assembly establishes that the multicounty planning policies and related goals satisfy the requirements for regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.026.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Executive Board is authorized to make technical amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy to reclassify cities and unincorporated areas within the VISION 2050 regional geographies framework for the exclusive purpose of establishing countywide growth targets as required by the Growth Management Act. Other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

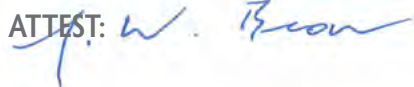
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Executive Board, in consultation with the policy boards as needed, is authorized to make amendments for designation of regional centers, update implementation actions, and direct technical updates and corrections to VISION 2050.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that PSRC staff is directed to prepare, reproduce and distribute the final VISION 2050 document and correct any non-substantive errors or omissions in the document.

**ADOPTED** by the Assembly this 29 day of October 2020



Bruce Dammeier  
Executive, Pierce County  
President, Puget Sound Regional Council

ATTEST: 

Josh Brown,  
Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council









# VISION 2050

A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region



Puget Sound Regional Council

October 2020





Alki Beach





## ***Puget Sound***

*Puget Sound is the largest marine estuary by volume in the United States. It connects the region to the Pacific Ocean and joins Washington and British Columbia together as part of the greater Salish Sea. The Snohomish, Puyallup, Green, Duwamish, Cedar, and many other rivers and streams flow through the central Puget Sound region and define distinct river basins that encompass cities, farms, forests, and mountains. It is this unique and remarkable natural environment that has drawn people to Puget Sound and sustained them for thousands of years.*



## *Ancestral Lands of the Coast Salish*

*Puget Sound is a part of a larger area that has been the traditional aboriginal territory of the Coast Salish peoples, who live around the Salish Sea in what is now Washington State and the Canadian province of British Columbia. The Coast Salish Tribes have lived here since time immemorial and while each tribe is unique, all share in having a deep historical connection and legacy of respect for the land and natural resources. These sovereign tribal nations enrich the region through environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and economic development, and collaborate with local governments to shape the region's future.*









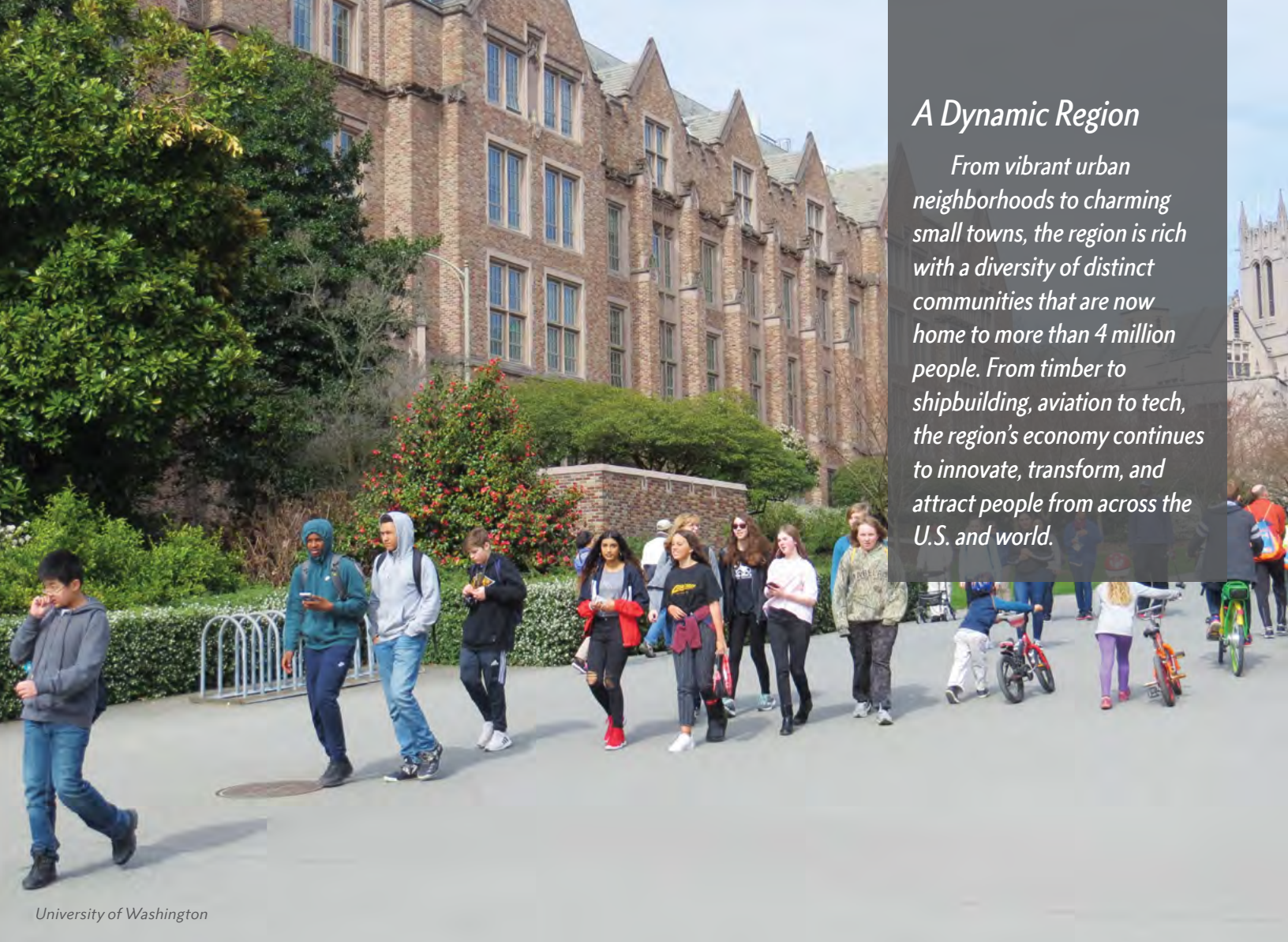


South Delridge Farmers Market



Pike Place Market





## *A Dynamic Region*

*From vibrant urban neighborhoods to charming small towns, the region is rich with a diversity of distinct communities that are now home to more than 4 million people. From timber to shipbuilding, aviation to tech, the region's economy continues to innovate, transform, and attract people from across the U.S. and world.*

University of Washington



Downtown Park in Redmond



# *Table of Contents*

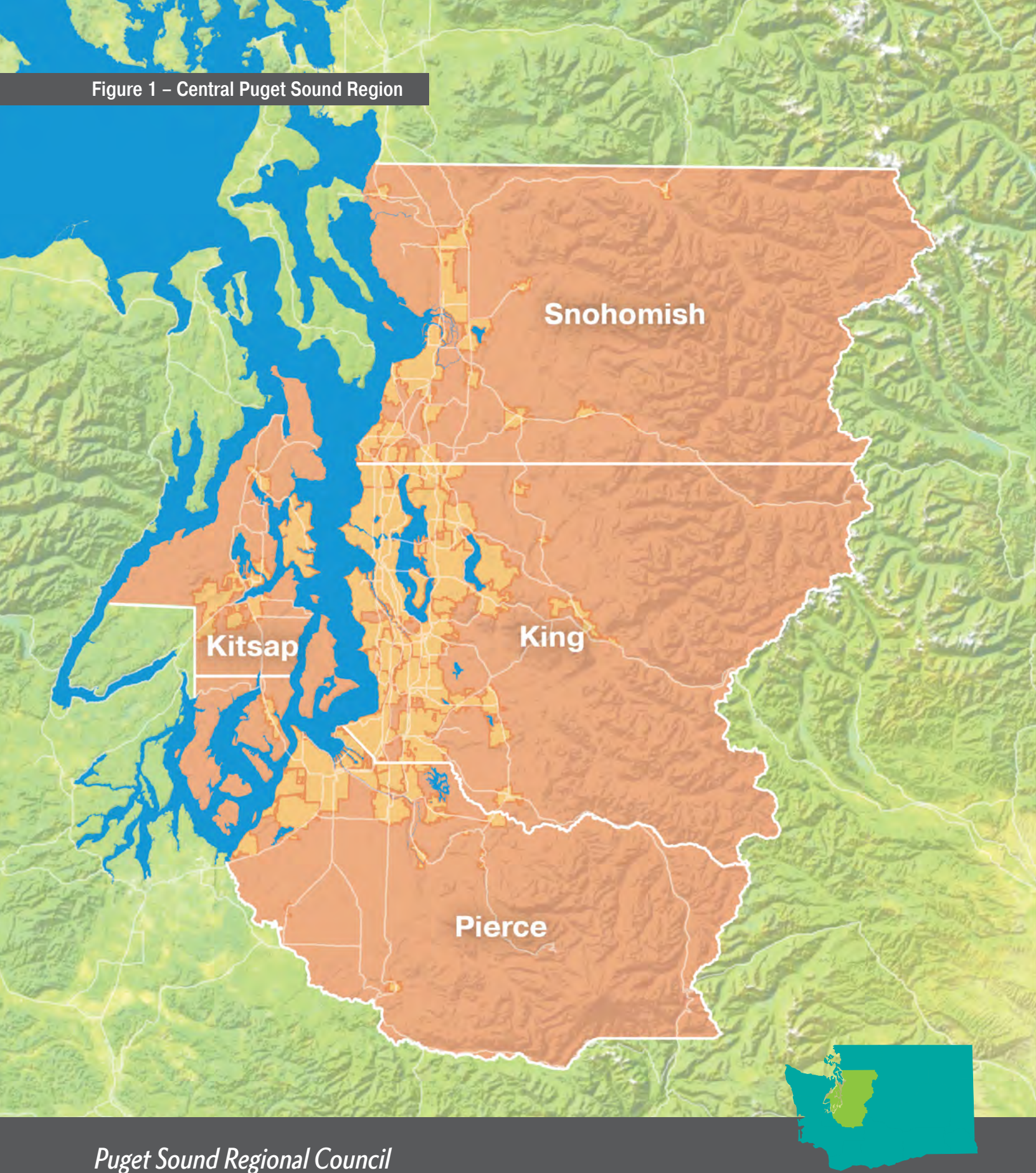
|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Introduction and Overview    A Vision for 2050         | 1   |
| Toward a Sustainable Future                            | 2   |
| User Guide   | 8   |
| Multicounty Planning Policies                          | 11  |
| Regional Collaboration                                 | 15  |
| Regional Growth Strategy                               | 23  |
| Environment  | 45  |
| Climate Change   | 55  |
| Development Patterns                                   | 63  |
| Housing  | 81  |
| Economy  | 91  |
| Transportation   | 99  |
| Public Services  | 109 |
| Implementation   | 117 |
| VISION 2050 Legal Framework                            | 123 |
| VISION 2050 Glossary of Terms                          | 125 |
| VISION 2050 Reference Materials & Supporting Documents | 133 |



## List of Figures

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 1 – Central Puget Sound Region   | xii |
| Figure 2 – Historic and Forecast Growth   | 2   |
| Figure 3 – Regional Planning Framework  | 13  |
| Figure 4 – Washington State Planning Framework                                  | 15  |
| Figure 5 – Regional Geographies   | 29  |
| Figure 6 – Population Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2017-50          | 30  |
| Figure 7 – Employment Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2017-50          | 30  |
| Figure 8 – Metropolitan Cities  | 31  |
| Figure 9 – Core Cities  | 32  |
| Figure 10 – High Capacity Transit Communities                                   | 33  |
| Figure 11 – Cities and Towns  | 35  |
| Figure 12 – Urban Unincorporated Areas  | 36  |
| Figure 13 – Rural Areas   | 37  |
| Figure 14 – Natural Resource Lands  | 38  |
| Figure 15 – Major Military Installations  | 40  |
| Figure 16 – Indian Reservation Lands  | 41  |
| Figure 17 – Value of Open Space Services in the Central Puget Sound Region      | 47  |
| Figure 18 – Regional Open Space Network Area by Category Including Overlap      | 48  |
| Figure 19 – Regional Open Space Network   | 49  |
| Figure 20 – Sources of Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions                        | 55  |
| Figure 21 – Sources of Regional Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions         | 56  |
| Figure 22 – Opportunity Map   | 65  |
| Figure 23 – Displacement Risk Map   | 67  |
| Figure 24 – Types of Centers and Transit Station Areas                          | 70  |
| Figure 25 – Regional Growth and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers                | 71  |
| Figure 26 – Regional Growth Centers and High-Capacity Transit Station Areas     | 72  |
| Figure 27 – Ownership Housing Stock by Housing Type, Central Puget Sound Region | 84  |
| Figure 28 – Lower Housing Costs Require Greater Public Intervention             | 85  |
| Figure 29 – Central Puget Sound Region Employment and Forecast by Sector        | 94  |
| Figure 30 – Share of Commuters, Travel Time Greater Than 1 Hour, 2010-2017      | 99  |
| Figure 31 – Regional Transportation System Map                                  | 101 |

Figure 1 – Central Puget Sound Region



## *Puget Sound Regional Council*

*The region's local governments come together at the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to make decisions about transportation, growth management, and economic development.*

*PSRC serves King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties, along with cities and towns, tribal governments, ports, and state and local transportation agencies within the region.*



# A Vision for 2050

*The central Puget Sound region provides an exceptional quality of life and opportunity for all, connected communities, a spectacular natural environment, and an innovative, thriving economy.*

## In 2050...

- **Climate.** The region's contribution to climate change has been substantially reduced.
- **Community.** Distinct, unique communities are supported throughout the region.
- **Diversity.** The region's diversity continues to be a strength. People from all backgrounds are welcome, and displacement due to development pressure is lessened.
- **Economy.** Economic opportunities are open to everyone, the region competes globally, and has sustained a high quality of life. Industrial, maritime, and manufacturing opportunities are maintained.
- **Environment.** The natural environment is restored, protected, and sustained, preserving and enhancing natural functions and wildlife habitats.
- **Equity.** All people can attain the resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life and enable them to reach their full potential.
- **Health.** Communities promote physical, social, and mental well-being so that all people can live healthier and more active lives.
- **Housing.** A range of housing types ensures that healthy, safe, and affordable housing choices are available and accessible for all people throughout the region.
- **Innovation.** The region has a culture of innovation that embraces and responds to change.
- **Mobility and Connectivity.** A safe, affordable, and efficient transportation system connects people and goods to where they need to go, promotes economic and environmental vitality, and supports the Regional Growth Strategy.
- **Natural Resources.** Natural resources are sustainably managed, supporting the continued viability of resource-based industries, such as forestry, agriculture, and aquaculture.
- **Public Facilities and Services.** Public facilities and services support the region's communities and plans for growth in a coordinated, fair, efficient, and cost-effective manner.
- **Resilience.** The region's communities plan for and are prepared to respond to potential impacts from natural and human hazards.
- **Rural Areas.** Rural communities and character are strengthened, enhanced, and sustained.



Seattle Center



# Toward a Sustainable Future

The combined efforts of individuals, governments, service providers, organizations, and the private sector are needed to achieve the region's vision and desired outcomes. VISION 2050 is the shared regional plan for moving toward a sustainable and more equitable future. It encourages decision-makers to make wise use of existing resources and planned transit investments while achieving the region's shared vision. VISION 2050 sets forth a pathway that strengthens economic, social, and environmental resiliency, while enhancing the region's ability to cope with adverse trends such as climate change and unmet housing needs. As the region experiences more growth, VISION 2050 seeks to provide housing, mobility options, and services in more sustainable ways. Most importantly, VISION 2050 is a call to action to meet the needs of a growing population while considering the current needs of residents. VISION 2050 recognizes that clean air, health, life expectancy, and access to jobs and good education can vary dramatically by neighborhood. VISION 2050 works to rectify the inequities of the past, especially for communities of color and people with low incomes.

The region is expected to grow by 1.5 million people by 2050, reaching a total population of

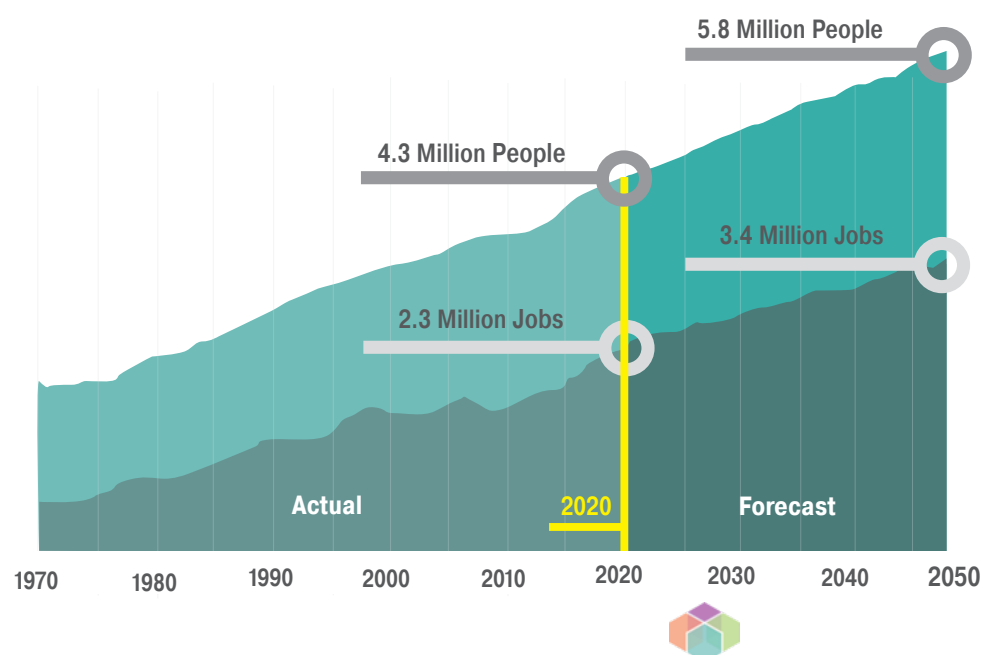
5.8 million. An anticipated 1.1 million more jobs are forecast by 2050. The region's population in 2050 will be older and more diverse, with smaller households than today. Planning for this much growth is difficult, and VISION 2050 recognizes that local, state, and federal governments are all challenged to keep up with the needs of a growing and changing population.

Over the last decade, sprawl has been curtailed and growth has largely occurred within urban areas, helping to preserve healthy and productive farms, forests, and rural lands. City and neighborhood centers are thriving with vibrant new businesses and the addition of thousands of people and jobs. Former low-density suburbs such as Lynnwood and Bothell are becoming vibrant, walkable urban communities that are regional destinations. South Lake Union and Paine Field are now internationally connected employment centers. Downtown Seattle, once a focus just for jobs, is now also a fast-growing residential neighborhood. Tacoma and Bremerton are revitalizing historic downtowns and growing. Yet VISION 2050 recognizes that "business as usual" will not be enough. As a result, VISION 2050 is a call for personal and institutional

action to address long-term regional challenges, including racial and social inequality, climate change, housing affordability, and imbalance of jobs and housing around the region.

During the development of VISION 2050, COVID-19 upended people's lives. While it is too soon to know the lasting impacts of COVID-19, the pandemic has amplified inequities within the region's communities.

Figure 2 – Historic and Forecast Growth







Urgent public health needs and the loss of life, severe impacts to local businesses and jobs, disruption of transit services, and the likelihood of growing evictions challenge the entire region and disproportionately affect Black and other minority communities. At the same time, communities throughout the country are wrestling with racial inequities. Nationwide protests brought into focus the systemic racism and implicit bias that threatens the health and safety of Black people across the country and world. While VISION 2050 identifies a long-term strategy for a healthy, more prosperous, and more equitable society, these recent events compound the challenges the region faces today that require immediate action and attention.

## Planning for 2050

VISION 2050 provides a framework for how and where development occurs and how the region supports efforts to manage growth. The Regional Transportation Plan provides a blueprint for improving and coordinating mobility, providing transportation choices, addressing special needs, moving the region's freight, and supporting the region's economy and environment. The region has committed to unprecedented levels of investment to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. A centerpiece of the emerging transportation system is an integrated local and regional high-capacity transit network of light and heavy rail, ferries, and bus rapid transit, which supplements the roads, rail, and maritime transportation system. PSRC works to distribute over \$260 million annually in federal transportation funding to

cities, counties, tribes, ports, and transit agencies. The Regional Economic Strategy identifies the leading drivers of the region's economy and the near-term actions for the region to sustain job growth and global competitiveness. The region has added 381,000 jobs since 2010. PSRC's economic development work is in coordination with the economic development offices for each county and local economic development efforts. In addition to developing regional plans, PSRC provides data, forecasts, research, and technical assistance to support local governments.

Washington's Growth Management Act sets the framework for regional and local planning to achieve shared goals. Local plans address land use, transportation, and environmental issues, and cities and counties plan for healthy, vibrant communities. Local investments in infrastructure and public transportation support new growth occurring in connected regional growth and employment centers, expanding access to opportunity to more residents throughout the region. Regional and local economic development plans support continued job growth to sustain a growing population.

How can we truly know what to plan for 30 years from now? While the future can be surprising, at a regional scale, population and job growth tends to follow long-range forecasts. Still, growth and change are not linear and can be disrupted by many factors. COVID-19 may slow near-term population and job growth, although it is too soon to know whether its impact will be within the range of economic cycles when viewed over the long-term. COVID-19 may have also accelerated the acceptance of remote work environments





by employers. PSRC will be closely tracking data that may shape the future of the region, including climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle technology and changes to transportation, the evolution of the workplace, and economic, employment, and population changes related to COVID-19, including the inequitable impacts of the pandemic. Monitoring and responding to data will allow the region to continue to proactively plan for the future we want to see.

## VISION 2050 Overview

Within this framework of state, regional, and local efforts, VISION 2050 coordinates actions across jurisdictional boundaries toward a shared vision for the future. Policies and actions in the plan work to...

### Increase housing choices and affordability

Housing is a top priority among the region's residents. Despite a strong surge in housing construction, the region continues to experience a housing affordability crisis that requires coordinated efforts to expand housing options and create greater affordability. This won't be easy. Market pressures and strong employment result in rising prices and rents. The region's cities need more housing supply to catch up with demand, but even with more housing options, housing will remain unaffordable to those earning the lowest incomes. Local governments generally do not build housing but do play an important role in shaping the type, location and amount of housing available by establishing zoning, setting density limits, and providing incentives for affordability.

VISION 2050 calls for cities and counties to support the building of more diverse housing types, especially near transit, services, and jobs, to ensure all residents have the opportunity to live in thriving urban places. VISION 2050 also calls for more housing affordable to low- and very low-income households. It recognizes that providing long-term affordable housing for the region's most vulnerable residents requires public intervention through funding, collaboration, and jurisdictional action and cannot be met by market forces alone. PSRC and its partners will develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy, and PSRC will develop tools and resources to assist

cities and counties with local housing efforts. Local actions will be critical for the region to make progress in addressing the lack of housing options and affordability.

### Provide opportunities for all

VISION 2050 is about the people of the region. However, not all residents have benefited equally from economic success, and long-time residents have been displaced. Inequitable investments in infrastructure and economic development have resulted in some strong communities, while others are severely lacking in access to important building blocks of success.

Historic policies at the local, regional, state, and federal levels have played a role in creating and maintaining racial inequities. Past restrictions on who was considered a citizen, who could vote, who could be involved in decision-making, who could own property, and where people could live have created disparate outcomes across every indicator for success—including health, criminal justice, education, jobs, housing, and household wealth. While discriminatory laws have been overturned, aspects of systemic racism persist and perpetuate inequitable outcomes.

VISION 2050 works to address current and past inequities, particularly among communities of color, people with low incomes, and historically underserved communities. It works to ensure that all people have access to the resources and opportunities to improve their quality of life. Recognizing that growth will put pressure on communities, VISION 2050 also seeks to reduce the risks of displacement of lower-income people and businesses through elevating social and racial equity in regional planning and encouraging integration of equity in local plans. PSRC will collaborate with its members and community partners to develop a regional equity strategy to advance this work and create and maintain tools and resources to better understand how regional and local policies and actions can address inequities.

### Sustain a strong economy

The central Puget Sound is a diverse region. VISION 2050 supports economic opportunities in all parts of the region, recognizing different strategies are appropriate to the size, scale, and character of each place. Smaller cities are often







important places for commercial, retail, and community services for adjacent rural areas. Farms and forests provide resource-based jobs and valuable products for the economy. The region's metropolitan cities are the economic and cultural hubs of the four counties. Regional manufacturing/industrial centers provide important global connections and living-wage jobs for residents.

VISION 2050 calls for economic growth and opportunity that creates widespread prosperity and living-wage jobs throughout the region. Job creation in all of the region's communities, along with more housing growth in and near major job centers, will result in a better balance of jobs and housing. VISION 2050 works to increase job growth, especially in Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties, to provide greater access to employment. This growth pattern will ensure that people have the opportunity to work, live, and prosper in each community. PSRC will implement the Regional Economic Strategy, to coordinate economic development efforts, strengthen the region's communities, and support the Regional Growth Strategy.

### **Significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions**

Climate change is an urgent environmental, economic, and equity threat being addressed at all levels, from the local to an international scale. The region's leaders have committed to taking

actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and being a model of a more sustainable urban region.

VISION 2050 works to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of state, regional and local emissions reduction goals. VISION 2050 guides development to compact, walkable places, with greater access to mobility options, where the need for cars is reduced. Significant reductions can occur through low-carbon fuels and electrifying the region's vehicle fleet. New technologies can make transportation more efficient and enable widespread deployment of vehicle charging infrastructure. Reducing building energy use is supported through conservation, green building, and retrofitting existing buildings. Carbon is sequestered in the region's forests, farm soils, wetlands, estuaries, and urban trees.

PSRC will implement a Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conduct an analysis of regional emission reduction strategies, and engage in regional resilience planning. In addition to reducing the region's carbon footprint, VISION 2050 calls for climate resilience and adaptation and reducing impacts to vulnerable populations that are at risk of being disproportionately impacted by climate change.

### **Keep the region moving**

People want convenient access to the jobs, amenities, schools, and open spaces that make the region a great place to live. Businesses







Bainbridge Island

rely on dependable access to markets, the workforce, and supply chains. VISION 2050 and the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) include a comprehensive regional transportation system that supports all modes of travel.

By 2050, more than 2 million people will be connected by the high-capacity transit system, and transit ridership is expected to more than double. The region's light rail, commuter rail, fast ferry, and bus rapid transit lines will expand into one of the country's largest high-capacity transit networks, with an emphasis on connecting centers. Residents will find it easier to get around using a broader mix of transportation choices than just driving alone. VISION 2050 prioritizes transportation investments that support regional growth and manufacturing/industrial centers and emphasizes completing regional transportation

projects planned through 2040. Beyond that, the region must identify the next generation of transportation improvements to further support mobility and consider transformative technologies that will impact transportation patterns and choices.

### Restore Puget Sound health

The region has made some progress restoring the health of Puget Sound, but the overall health of the Sound continues to decline. Orca and salmon populations are struggling, and some shellfish are too contaminated to eat. This not only jeopardizes the natural environment and our economy, but also our sense of place and identity as a region. Contaminated stormwater is one of the biggest threats to Puget Sound water quality. Excess nutrients, agriculture and





lawn runoff, leaky septic tanks, under-treated sewage treatment plant effluent, contamination of aquifers, and low stream flows are other concerns.

VISION 2050 supports the work of the Puget Sound Partnership to promote a coordinated approach to watershed planning and restoring the health of Puget Sound. Protection of open space and restoration of existing urban lands through redevelopment and public investment are key strategies for reducing water pollution and restoring streams, rivers, lakes, and Puget Sound. Replacing outdated infrastructure through redevelopment and retrofit projects, and building sustainably through low-impact development, will reduce environmental toxins.

### **Protect a network of open space**

A healthy natural environment is the foundation for the region's high quality of life and thriving economy. In 2018, PSRC developed a [Regional Open Space Conservation Plan](#) that includes protection of more than 400,000 acres of the region's farms, forests, natural areas, and aquatic systems that are at risk. The plan identifies a need for 300 miles of regional trails to better connect people to the open space network and for more than 40 new park opportunities to provide equitable, walkable access to urban open space. Everyone should have access to the natural beauty of the region.

VISION 2050 directs PSRC to work with members, resource agencies, and tribes to conserve, restore, and steward the region's open space and natural environment and implement the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan. The region will protect natural areas and enhance the tree canopy through regional, collaborative approaches that leverage local, county, and stakeholder actions. The Regional Growth Strategy is one of VISION 2050's most important environmental strategies, guiding growth to cities and urban areas to reduce development pressures that threaten farms, forests, and natural areas.

### **Grow in centers and near transit**

VISION 2050 focuses greater amounts of growth within regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas. In all parts of the region, growth in more compact, walkable, transit-served

locations will help reduce environmental impacts, lessen congestion, and improve health outcomes while creating vibrant, attractive neighborhoods where people can live, work, and play.

The Regional Growth Strategy has an ambitious goal of attracting 65% of population growth to the region's growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas, leveraging unprecedented investments to expand public transit throughout the region. Focusing growth in these areas provides people with greater mobility options and increases access to jobs, schools, and services. Connecting people to jobs, services and transit shortens commutes, reduces pollution, and gives people more time to spend with their families. VISION 2050 requires cities to plan for regional centers, and PSRC will work with counties and cities as they set local housing and employment targets that implement the Regional Growth Strategy.

### **Act collaboratively and support local efforts**

The central Puget Sound is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. This rapid rate of change and the intent to create a better, more welcoming, healthier region makes working collaboratively imperative. Achieving the aspirations of VISION 2050 cannot be accomplished through individual efforts alone.

Coordinated planning between cities, counties, ports and other special purpose districts, agencies, tribes, and military installations is a foundational part of VISION 2050. The plan recognizes that supporting the vision for the future requires continued investment in all of the region's communities and exploration of new funding sources and other fiscal tools to accomplish the vision.

PSRC will assist cities and counties as they update countywide policies, growth targets, and local plans. Success will require continued action at the state level, and PSRC will support legislation that can help develop and implement local and regional plans. PSRC will also monitor the implementation of VISION 2050 and use targets, performance measures, plan review, and funding to work towards successful implementation.





# User Guide

VISION 2050, the long-range plan for the central Puget Sound region, fulfills requirements under Washington's Growth Management Act to develop multicounty planning policies. The policies also serve as the region's guidelines and principles required under RCW 47.80. The plan is grounded in the public's commitment to environmental sustainability, social equity, and efficient growth management that maximizes economic strength and mobility. The plan looks ahead to the year 2050, recognizing the significant growth the region expects. VISION 2050 is comprised of three parts:

1. **Introduction and Overview**
2. **Multicounty Planning Policies**
3. **Implementation**

*Downtown Seattle*





**Introduction and Overview** – introduces the reader to the region, the vision for the future, desired outcomes, and how VISION 2050 establishes a plan to help the region grow in a more sustainable and socially equitable manner. It serves as both an introduction and a broad summary of VISION 2050.

**Multicounty Planning Policies** – includes the policies and actions of VISION 2050, as well as the Regional Growth Strategy.

The Regional Growth Strategy promotes a focused regional growth pattern. It builds on current growth management plans and recommits the region to directing future development into the urban growth area, while focusing new housing and jobs in cities and within a limited number of designated regional growth centers. The roles of different communities in implementing the growth strategy are described in the Regional Growth Strategy chapter. This section serves as a guide for counties and cities as they set local growth targets through their countywide processes.

The region's multicounty planning policies are adopted under the state's Growth Management Act. Multicounty planning policies are designed to achieve the Regional Growth Strategy and address regionwide issues within a collaborative framework. Multicounty planning policies are a regional commitment intended to be reflected and supported by regional, county, and local plans. The policies provide direction for more efficient use of public and private investments. Counties and cities look to multicounty planning policies to inform updates to countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plan updates. In addition to multicounty planning policies, each policy chapter contains actions that identify PSRC and local implementation items that contribute to achieving the regional vision and desired outcomes. PSRC and local jurisdictions are expected to address these actions through their planning and work programs.

**Implementation** – describes the programs and processes that implement VISION 2050. In addition to the topic-specific actions, this section outlines the regional programs, including:

- Data, tools, and local assistance
- Support for and review of local and regional plans
- The Regional Transportation Plan and associated project funding
- The Regional Economic Strategy
- Other regional actions, such as Regional Housing and Equity Strategies

PSRC's plan review process ensures that countywide planning policies, local comprehensive plans, subarea plans for regional centers, and transit agency plans are consistent with VISION 2050 and the Growth Management Act. Other regional planning efforts, such as the Regional Transportation Plan and associated funding, along with the Regional Economic Strategy, are discussed. The Implementation chapter also describes the VISION 2050 amendment process and legal framework. In addition, a glossary and a list of reference materials are available on the VISION 2050 webpage.

Together, these parts of VISION 2050 help guide the region as it experiences significant population and employment growth. VISION 2050 was developed with input from local officials, interest and advocacy groups, and residents. VISION 2050 acknowledges that jurisdictions are increasingly interdependent. Decisions made at a local level regarding land use, transportation, economic development, and the environment are inextricably linked. VISION 2050 promotes continued regional collaboration to ensure sustained success for all of the communities within the central Puget Sound region.

