



PART II: Regional Growth Strategy

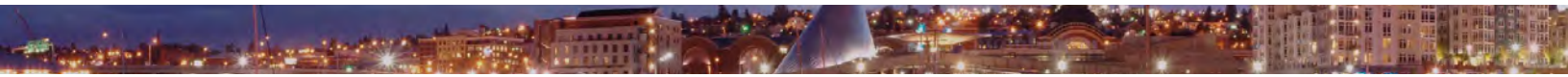
VISION 2040 is a shared strategy for how and where the central Puget Sound region can grow to a forecast 5 million people and 3 million jobs by the year 2040. The Regional Growth Strategy looks at how the region can distribute forecast growth, primarily within the designated urban growth area. The strategy is a description of a preferred pattern of urbanization that has been designed to minimize environmental impacts, support economic prosperity, promote adequate and affordable housing, improve mobility, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure. The strategy provides regional guidance for counties, cities, and towns to use as they develop new local population and employment growth targets and update local comprehensive plans. The Regional Growth Strategy describes a pattern of vibrant urban areas and healthy rural and natural resource landscapes that reflects the region's commitment to people, prosperity and planet.

The region's first growth management strategy, adopted in 1990 as the original VISION 2020, was developed to better integrate land use and transportation planning. Following guidance in the state Growth Management Act, VISION 2020 was updated in 1995 to provide a regional framework for focusing growth within the defined urban growth area, especially within compact urban communities and vibrant centers of activity. The strategy was also designed to help preserve rural areas and resource lands, address economic development, and advance more orderly patterns of development.

VISION 2040 continues to emphasize the important role of centers and compact urban communities in accommodating future population and employment. VISION 2040 envisions a future where:

- The overall natural environment is restored, protected, and sustained.
- Population and employment growth is focused within the designated urban growth area.
- Within the urban growth area, growth is focused in cities.
- Within cities, centers serve as concentrations of jobs, housing, and other activities.

- A better balance of job locations and housing is achieved, facilitated, and supported by incentives and investments.
- Rural development is minimized.
- Resource lands are permanently protected, supporting the continued viability of resource-based industries, such as forestry and agriculture.
- Existing infrastructure and new investments are used more efficiently and effectively, and are prioritized for areas that are planning for and accommodating growth.
- Meaningful steps are taken to reduce carbon emissions and minimize the region's contribution to climate change.



Focusing Growth in the Urban Growth Area and in Centers

The Growth Management Act identifies three distinct landscapes: urban lands, rural lands, and natural resource lands (i.e., agricultural, forest and mineral lands). The Act makes clear that the long-term sustainability of rural and resource lands is dependent on accommodating development within the designated urban growth area.

Urban Land. Counties and cities are required to designate an urban growth area where growth is intended to be concentrated as a means of controlling urban sprawl. Since the Growth Management Act's adoption, the region's counties, in consultation with their cities, have identified and designated an urban growth area with sufficient capacity to accommodate forecast growth. Part of the intent of designating the urban growth area is to help channel investments in infrastructure within already built-up areas — especially cities — and to discourage growth in rural areas.

Cities and Unincorporated Urban Areas. Within the designated urban area, there are incorporated cities and unincorporated urban growth areas. Portions of the region's unincorporated urban areas are designated as potential annexation areas for cities. Since these potential annexation areas can typically receive urban services from adjacent cities, they should accommodate a greater share of growth in unincorporated urban areas than nonaffiliated areas.

Centers. The emphasis on the development of centers throughout the region is at the heart of VISION 2040's approach to growth management. Centers are locations characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development, with a mix of different office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses. While relatively small geographically, centers are strategic places identified to

receive a significant proportion of future population and employment growth when compared to the rest of the urban area. Centers of different sizes and scales — from the largest centers to the smallest — are envisioned for all of the region's cities.

Concentrating growth in centers allows cities and other urban service providers to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, make more efficient and less costly investments in new infrastructure, and minimize the environmental impact of urban growth. Centers create improved accessibility and mobility for walking, biking, and transit, and as a result play a key transportation role in the region.

Regional growth centers are envisioned as major focal points of higher density population and employment, served with efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure and services. These regionally designated places are the primary locations for the arts, civic activity, commerce, and recreation. The regional growth centers, with their concentration of people and jobs, form the backbone of the transportation network for the four-county region. Linking these centers with a highly efficient transportation system allows the region to take actions to reduce the rate of growth in vehicle miles traveled, especially by providing and expanding transportation choices. Consequently, regionally significant centers should receive priority in regional and local investments in the infrastructure and services that are critical for supporting growth.

Manufacturing/Industrial Centers. The region also contains a number of manufacturing/industrial centers. These are existing employment areas with intensive, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses that cannot be easily mixed with other activities. Manufacturing/





Development Patterns and Climate Change

Studies show that the infrastructure requirements, building operations, and transportation needs associated with low-density development patterns result in roughly two and a half times the annual greenhouse gas emissions and two times the energy used per capita compared to higher density development patterns.

(“Comparing High and Low Residential Density” in Journal of Urban Planning and Development — March 2006)

industrial centers are intended to continue to accommodate a significant amount of regional employment.

Manufacturing/industrial centers have a different urban form and purpose than regional growth centers. They can be characterized as areas of large contiguous blocks served by the region's major transportation infrastructure, including roads, rail, and port facilities. These centers have generally developed an urban form suitable for outdoor storage and facilities, with large spaces for the assembly of goods. They do not typically contain residential uses. Protecting these centers from incompatible uses, as well as providing them with adequate public facilities and services, requires deliberate and careful planning. Good access to the region's transportation system, in particular, will contribute to their continued success.

Rural Land. The region's varied rural areas offer a diverse set of natural amenities. Common elements of rural areas include small-scale farms, wooded areas, lakes and streams, and open spaces. Technically, rural lands are those areas that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential patterns that preserve rural character.

Natural Resource Lands. Most of the region's total land area is designated as natural resource lands. These areas include agricultural lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of food or other agricultural products, forest lands that have long-term significance for the commercial production of timber, and mineral lands that have long-term significance for the extraction of minerals. The vast majority of this land falls under the forest lands designation, and much of this is protected under federal, state, and local regulations.

Critical Areas. The Growth Management Act requires that each city and county identify and protect critical areas before identifying areas of urban growth. Critical areas include both hazardous areas, such as floodplains and steep slopes, and environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands and streams. Critical areas also include zones that are important for protecting groundwater, fish, and wildlife habitat areas, frequently flooded areas, and geologically hazardous areas. The Act requires that the best available science be used in the designation and protection of critical areas. In practice, counties and cities do allow a certain amount of development in critical areas. In most jurisdictions, however, development can occur only under certain circumstances, such as when disruption to critical areas is minimal. The Endangered Species Act, a federal statute protecting threatened and endangered species, can override rights to develop by prohibiting activities that might interfere with protected species.

Development, Sustainability and the Climate.

Since the adoption of the Growth Management Act, a transformational issue has emerged that has the potential to affect nearly every topic addressed by VISION 2040 and the future of the region: global climate change. Human factors associated with climate change include not only the methods we employ to create energy, travel, and manufacture and transport goods, but also the energy requirements of the very communities and patterns of development created over the last 50 years.

In response to the central challenge to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while creating more sustainable communities, VISION 2040 builds on the state Growth Management Act framework, as well as on the regional emphasis of focusing growth into centers.

Distributing Growth Using Regional Geographies

A hallmark of VISION 2040 is its *Regional Growth Strategy* that provides specific numeric guidance to achieve a development pattern with fewer environmental impacts and a more compact urban form. VISION 2040 provides guidance for the distribution of growth to regional geographies, which are defined by the idea that different types of cities and unincorporated areas will play distinct roles in the region's future. Cities, towns, and neighborhoods of various sizes and character will continue to offer a wide choice of living options. The region's original growth center concept fits within the regional geographies framework, with centers of different sizes and scales envisioned for all cities.

In the *Regional Growth Strategy*, the region's landscape has been divided into seven types of geographies. Metropolitan Cities (five cities) and Core Cities (14 cities, including unincorporated Silverdale) have cities with designated regional growth centers. These two groups of cities are and will be the most intensely urban places in the region. The Larger Cities (18 cities) category groups together the next tier of large cities that have similar amounts of population and employment. The Small Cities (46 cities) category is further subdivided into three types to reflect the wide variety of smaller cities and towns throughout the region, as well as the different roles they will likely play in accommodating forecast growth. Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas capture a wide variety of urban lands, both lightly and heavily developed. The transformation of these urban lands will be critical to the region's future success. Rural Areas and Natural Resources Lands are categories that describe the different types of unincorporated areas outside the urban growth area, and include very low-density housing, working landscapes, and open space.

These regional geographies provide a framework for the distribution of the region's forecast growth for the year 2040. The use of these geographies provides more specificity than at the broader county level, yet it does not get too specific at the individual city level. (However, in some instances an individual city may stand alone within a regional geography category.) This framework provides clearer regional guidance about the roles of different types of cities in accommodating regional growth.

A Guide for Growth Planning. The *Regional Growth Strategy* focuses the majority of the region's employment and housing growth into both Metropolitan and Core Cities, which together contain more than two dozen designated regional growth centers. The centers in these cities are intended to attract residents and businesses because of their proximity to services and jobs, a variety of housing types, access to regional amenities, high quality transit service, and other advantages.

Centers in other Larger Cities also play an important and increased role over time as places that accommodate growth. These are locations in and around traditional downtown main streets, town centers, neighborhood shopping areas, key transit stations, ferry terminals, and other transportation and service centers. These centers provide local and regional services and amenities, and are also locations of redevelopment and increased activity, becoming more significant secondary job centers.

At a smaller scale, locally identified city and town centers also serve similar roles for Small Cities, providing services and housing that support vital and active communities at intensities appropriate to smaller municipalities. Growth in the unincorporated urban growth area would be prioritized in areas that are affiliated for annexation into incorporated jurisdictions. In the *Regional Growth Strategy*, significantly less residential growth would occur in the region's rural areas than the trend suggested in current adopted growth targets and plans.

Future Adjustments. Cities were grouped into their respective regional geographies based on year 2000 population numbers from the U.S. Census, and PSRC employment numbers based on estimates derived from the Washington State Employment Security Department. The Regional Council recognizes that as cities continue to grow, both through net increase and through annexation of unincorporated areas, their population and employment levels may change significantly. To reflect these changes, it is anticipated that the Regional Council's Executive Board will make a technical amendment to the *Regional Growth Strategy* to potentially reclassify cities before the region's counties undertake the next round of Growth Management Act target-setting work. (This is anticipated to occur in 2011 or earlier.)

The Regional Growth Strategy by the Numbers

The VISION 2040 growth strategy is comprised of two parts. First is a growth concept that builds on the foundation provided in the Growth Management Act, emphasizing the role of the urban growth area and urban centers in accommodating future population and employment. The second part — the numbers by regional geographies — contains specific guidance for the distribution of growth. The regional geographies framework calls for focusing growth primarily into different categories of cities, and recognizes the different roles of the region's counties in accommodating population and employment growth.

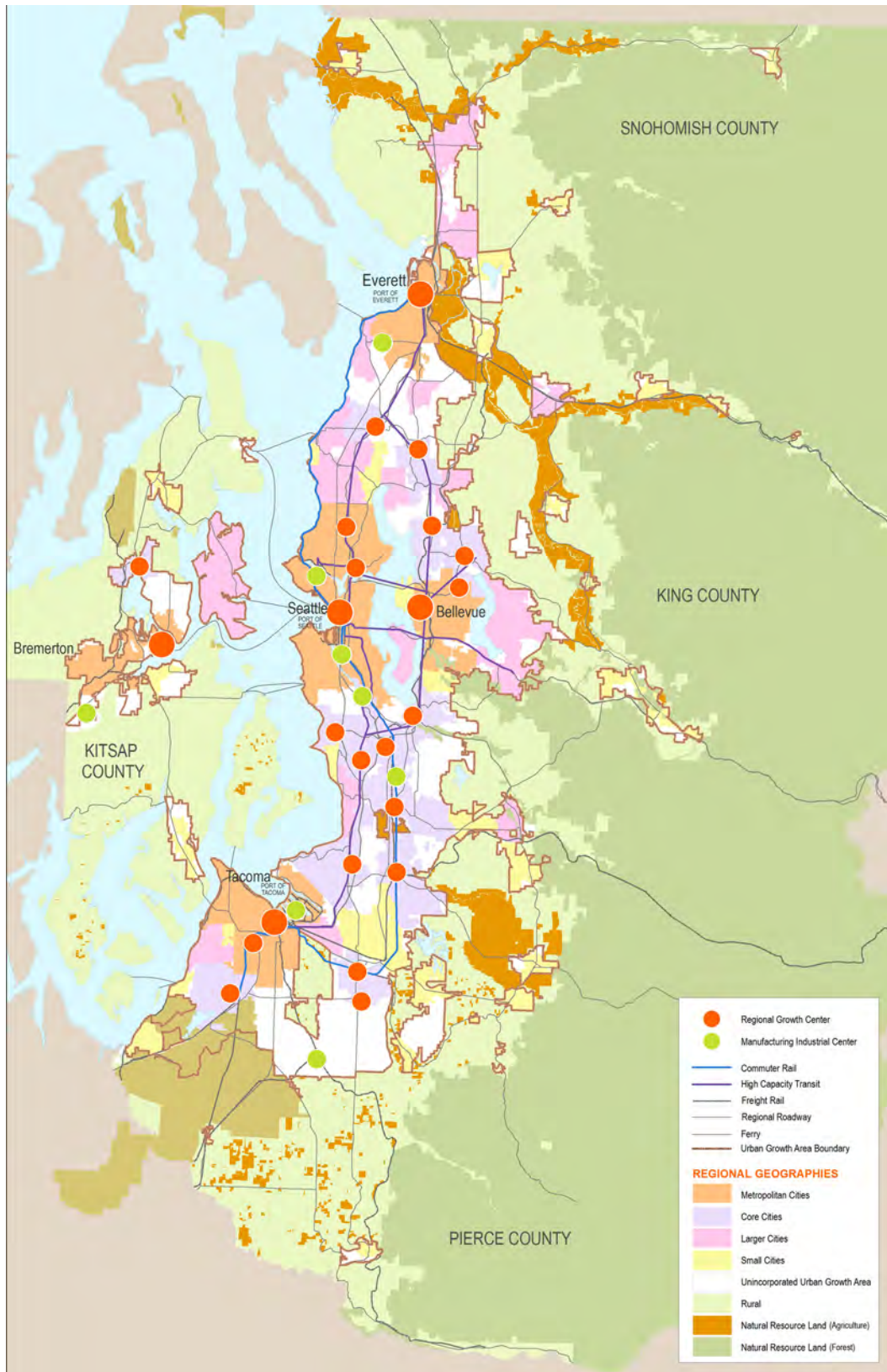
The *Regional Growth Strategy* is intended to guide and coordinate the region's cities and towns as they periodically update local residential and employment growth targets — based on population forecasts developed by the state Office of Financial Management — and amend their local comprehensive plans.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for different regional geographies to accommodate different shares of population and employment growth — within the region as a whole, as well as within each county. While relative amounts may differ somewhat between counties, the roles of regional geographies within each county are consistent for the region as a whole. Within each county, the relative distribution of growth to individual cities will be determined through countywide target-setting, taking into account local circumstances.

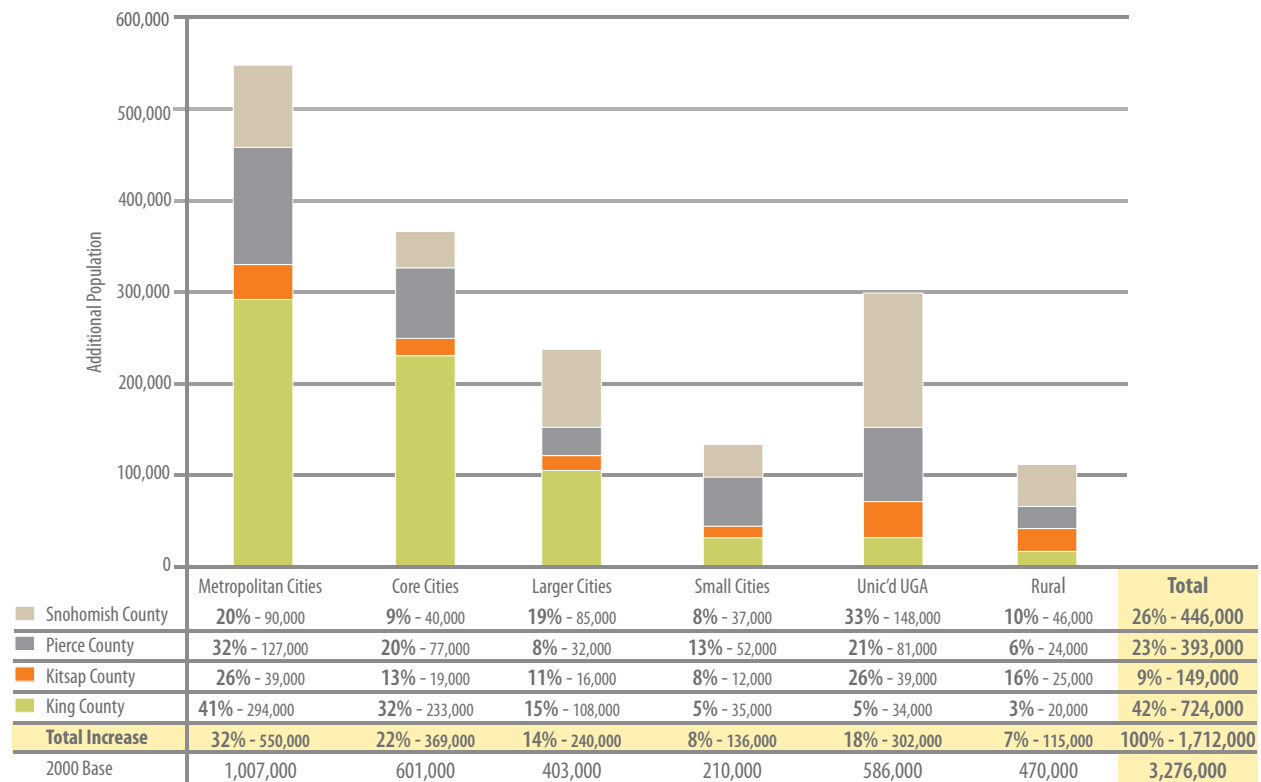
The distribution of growth in the *Regional Growth Strategy* was developed using Regional Council small area regional population and employment forecasts for the year 2040. When looking at the numbers in the tables that follow, the percentages of regional and county growth may be more useful for local planning than the specific numbers contained in the forecasts, as the numbers will change marginally in future rounds of regional forecasts.



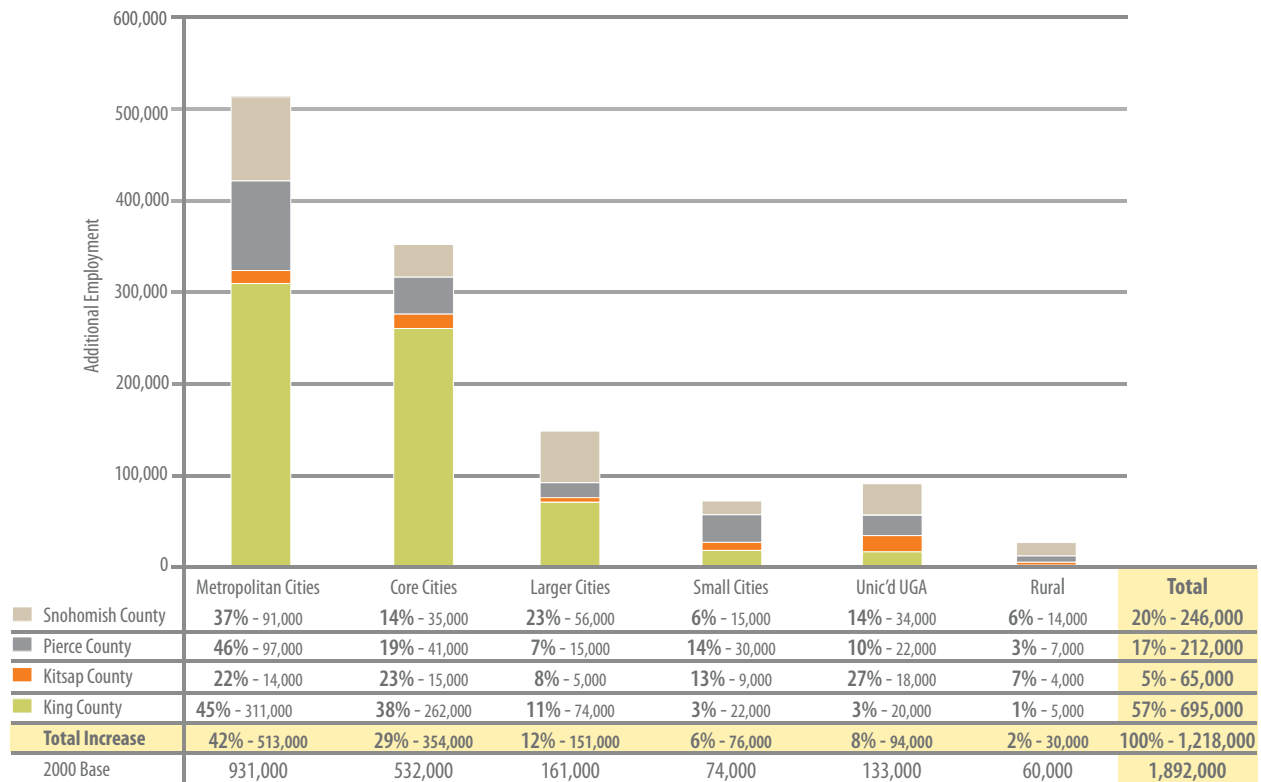
Regional Growth Strategy for Central Puget Sound



Population Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2000–2040



Employment Growth by Regional Geography and County, 2000–2040



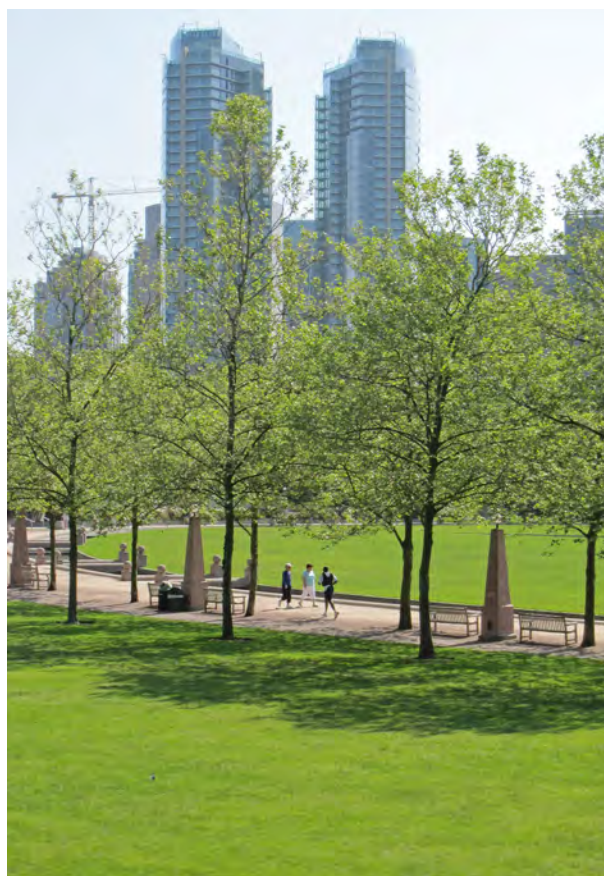
Urban Regional Geographies



Metropolitan Cities. Each of the four counties in the region contains at least one central city that serves as a civic, cultural, and economic hub. At least one regional growth center — if not more — has been designated within each of these Metropolitan Cities to serve as a focal point for accommodating both population and employment growth.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for the five Metropolitan Cities to accommodate 32 percent of regional population growth and 42 percent of regional employment growth by the year 2040. (This is an increased role compared to current adopted targets for the year 2025, which call for approximately 24 percent of regional population growth and 40 percent of regional employment growth to occur in Metropolitan Cities.) It would be consistent with the spirit of the *Regional Growth Strategy* for the region's Metropolitan Cities to accommodate an even larger share of forecast regional growth.

Metropolitan Cities (five cities, 222 square miles): Bellevue, Bremerton, Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma.



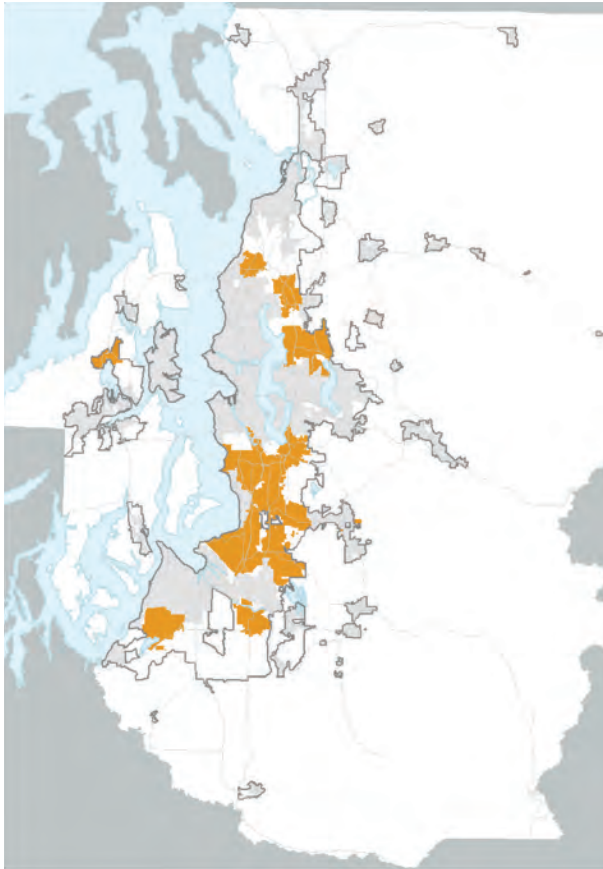
City of Bellevue

Metropolitan Cities in King and Pierce counties are expected to accommodate larger shares of their respective counties' growth than those in Kitsap and Snohomish counties.

Core Cities. The region also contains a number of other major cities with regionally designated growth centers, which are intended to accommodate a significant share of future growth. These cities are called Core Cities in the *Regional Growth Strategy*. These 13 cities (along with the unincorporated community of Silverdale) contain key hubs for the region's long-range multimodal transportation system, and are major civic, cultural, and employment centers within their counties. The *Regional Growth Strategy* envisions a major role for these cities in accommodating growth.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for the 14 Core Cities to accommodate 22 percent of the region's population growth and 29 percent of its employment growth by the year 2040. (This is an increased role compared to current adopted targets for the year 2025, which call for approximately 17 percent of regional population growth and 26 percent of regional employment growth to occur in Core Cities.)

Core Cities (14 total —13 cities plus Silverdale, 212 square miles): Auburn, Bothell, Burien, Federal Way, Kent, Kirkland, Lakewood, Lynnwood, Puyallup, Redmond, Renton, SeaTac, Silverdale, and Tukwila.



King County's Core Cities are expected to accommodate a much larger share of King County's growth than Core City shares of Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.

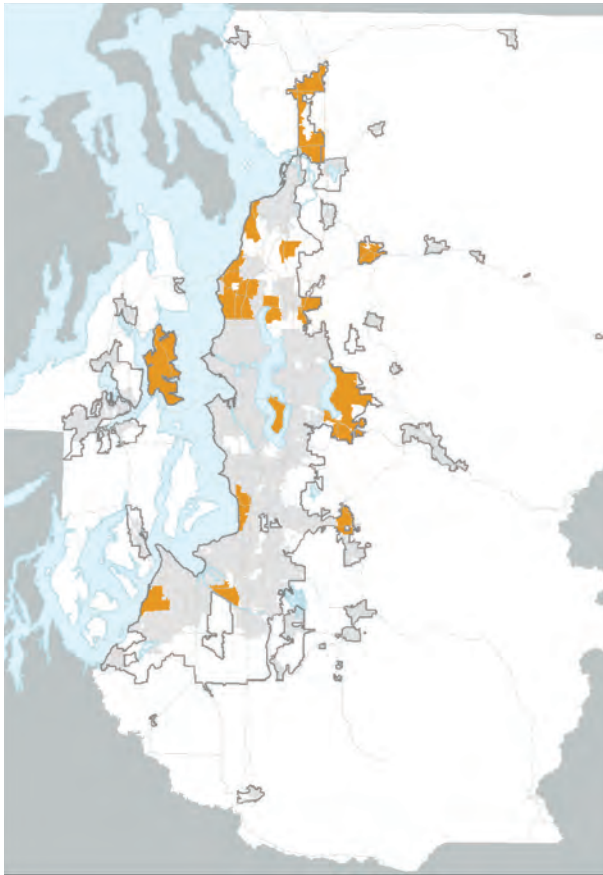


City of Kent

Larger Cities. The region also contains other Larger Cities that are grouped together because they each have a combined population and employment total over 22,500. This figure was a natural break among the region's 82 cities and towns. Many of these 18 cities are home to important local and regional transit stations, ferry terminals, park-and-ride facilities, and other transportation connections. Central places within this group of cities are expected to become more important subregional job, service, cultural, and housing centers over time. The *Regional Growth Strategy* envisions an expanding role for these cities in accommodating growth.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for the 18 Larger Cities to accommodate 14 percent of the region's population growth and 12 percent of its employment growth by the year 2040. (This is an increased role compared to current adopted targets for the year 2025, which call for approximately 8 percent of regional population growth and 7 percent of regional employment growth to occur in Larger Cities.)

Larger Cities (18 cities, 167 square miles): Arlington, Bainbridge Island, Des Moines, Edmonds, Fife, Issaquah, Kenmore, Maple Valley, Marysville, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, Monroe, Mukilteo, Sammamish, Shoreline, University Place, and Woodinville.



The shares of county growth going to Larger Cities are fairly similar regionwide, with a somewhat lower share in Pierce County.

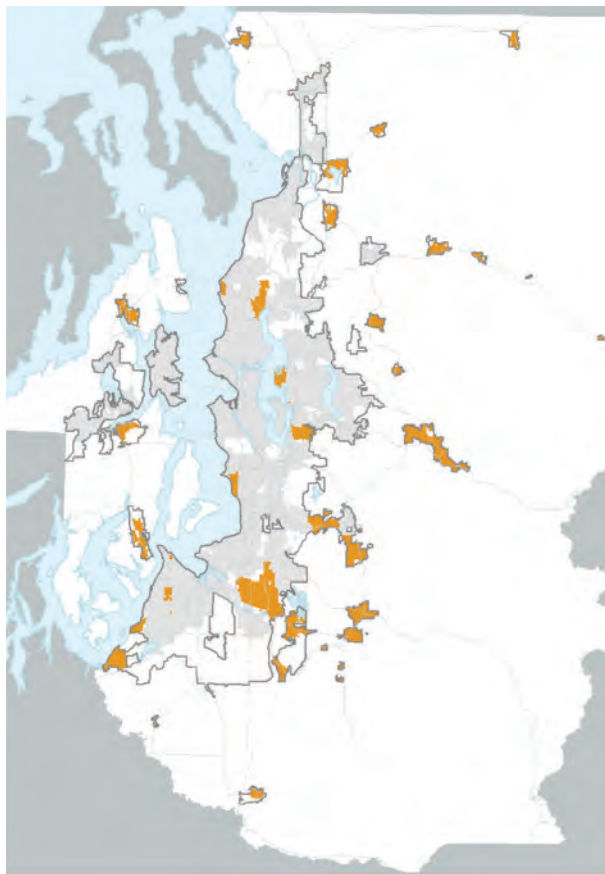


City of Edmonds

Small Cities. The region's 46 smaller cities and towns (see sidebar on the following page) are expected to remain relatively small for the long term. Their locally designated city or town centers provide local job, service, cultural, and housing areas for their communities. These central places should be identified in local comprehensive plans, and become priority areas for future investments and growth at the local level. The *Regional Growth Strategy* envisions a moderate role for most of these cities in accommodating growth.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for 46 Small Cities to accommodate 8 percent of the region's population growth and 6 percent of its employment growth by the year 2040, which is similar to their current role in accommodating growth. This compares to current adopted targets for the year 2025, which call for approximately 10 percent of regional population growth and 9 percent of regional employment growth to occur in Small Cities.

Small Cities (46 cities, 136 square miles): See sidebar on page 24 for a list of Small Cities.



City of Sumner

Small Cities are located throughout the region and represent nearly two-thirds of the region's incorporated jurisdictions. Small Cities in Pierce County are expected to accommodate the highest share of regional Small City population growth.

The Region's Small Cities

The region's Small Cities typically have a population well under 10,000, markedly smaller than the 31 Metropolitan, Core, and Larger Cities. Among the region's Small Cities are traditional suburbs, small residential towns, and cities in the rural area. The Regional Growth Strategy recognizes these distinctions. The following list show the groupings of various small towns.

- **Cities Inside the Contiguous Urban Growth Area:**

These cities will likely receive a larger share of Small City growth due to their proximity to the region's larger cities, existing and planned transportation systems, and other supporting infrastructure. Over time, some of these cities may become Larger Cities, and assume an even greater role in accommodating regional growth and activity. Most, however, will remain relatively small over the long term.

Algona, Black Diamond, Bonney Lake, Brier, Covington, DuPont, Edgewood, Fircrest, Gig Harbor, Lake Forest Park, Lake Stevens, Medina, Mill Creek, Milton, Newcastle, Normandy Park, Orting, Pacific, Port Orchard, Poulsbo, Ruston, Steilacoom, and Sumner.



City of Port Orchard

- **Small Residential Towns:**

These very small towns are primarily residential, with little potential for accommodating a great deal of growth. They will likely remain quite similar to today, and receive a lesser share of Small City growth.

Beaux Arts, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Woodway, and Yarrow Point.



Town of Hunts Point

- **Free-Standing Cities and Towns:**

These cities are urban islands surrounded by rural and resource lands and separated from the contiguous urban growth area. They should serve as hubs for relatively higher density housing choices, and as job and service centers for surrounding rural areas. Due to their isolation from the rest of the designated urban growth area, they will likely receive a lesser overall share of Small City growth, and are not expected to grow as much as Small Cities within the contiguous urban growth area.

Buckley, Carbonado, Carnation, Darrington, Duvall, Eatonville, Enumclaw, Gold Bar, Granite Falls, Index, North Bend, Roy, Skykomish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, South Prairie, Stanwood, Sultan, and Wilkeson.



City of Skykomish

Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas. Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas represent the largest amount of land area for any of the urban regional geography categories. These urban areas are quite diverse, with both lightly developed fringe areas and neighborhoods that are much more urban and nearly indistinguishable from surrounding incorporated jurisdictions. County buildable lands analyses suggest that these areas have the potential to accommodate significant growth for the long term, and that there will be little need to significantly expand the designated urban growth area. The process for adjusting the urban growth area is provided in the Growth Management Act.

Approximately 60 percent of the lands within the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area has been identified by cities as potential annexation areas, or is otherwise “affiliated” with cities for annexation. VISION 2040 envisions that in time most of the unincorporated area inside the urban growth area will be affiliated with existing cities. It is assumed that eventually all of this area will be annexed to or incorporated as cities.

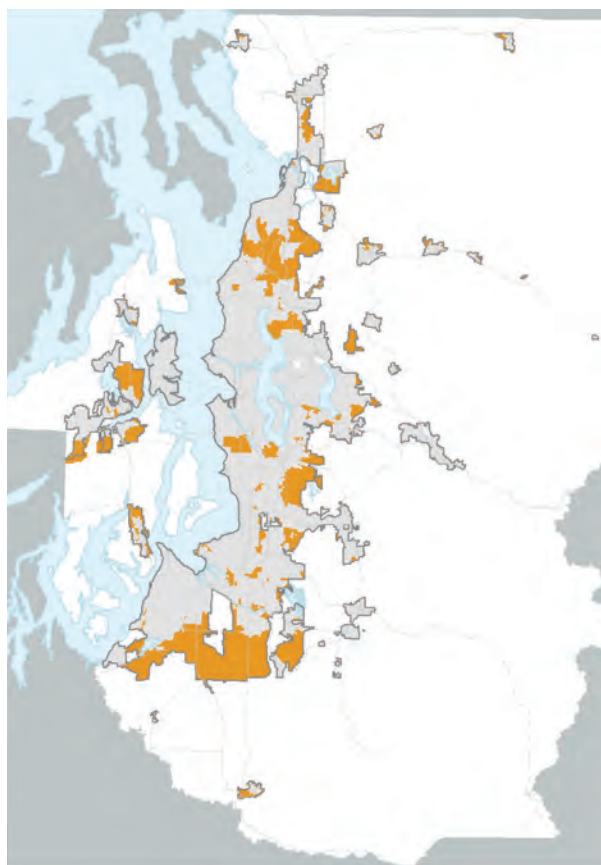
Based on information from the region’s counties, approximately 70 percent of the population growth currently identified for the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area is planned for locations that are already affiliated for annexation with existing cities and towns. These areas, which are closely related to their adjacent city, are expected to accommodate a larger share of overall unincorporated urban growth than unaffiliated areas.

Careful planning and development of the unincorporated portions of the urban growth area are vital to ensure that they assume appropriate urban densities and an urban form that can be efficiently supported by regional and local infrastructure and services. Planning and permitting that is well-coordinated between the counties and adjacent cities will be key to implementing the *Regional Growth Strategy*.

The *Regional Growth Strategy* calls for the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area to accommodate 18 percent of the region’s population growth and 8 percent of the employment growth by the year 2040. (This is a somewhat decreased role in accommodating growth compared to current adopted targets for the year 2025, which call for approximately 30 percent of regional population growth and 15 percent of regional employment growth in the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area. Note that annexations have also reduced the overall land area of the UUGA since 2025 targets were adopted.)

Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas (260 square miles): All four counties have designated unincorporated urban growth areas, many of which are affiliated for annexation with incorporated cities and towns.

The unincorporated urban growth area in Snohomish County has the highest share of anticipated population and employment growth, followed by Kitsap, Pierce, and King counties.



Rural and Natural Resource Regional Geographies



In addition to its focus on urban areas, the *Regional Growth Strategy* follows Growth Management Act guidance in supporting the long-term use of rural and designated natural resource lands for farming and forestry, recreation, cottage industries, mining, and limited low-density housing supported by rural levels of service. Cities and towns surrounded by or adjacent to rural and resource areas should provide the majority of services and jobs for rural residents, as well as more concentrated and varied housing options. The *Regional Growth Strategy* provides guidance on levels of residential growth in rural areas, encourages the transfer of development from rural and resource areas into urban areas, and seeks to ensure that proposed levels of development are consistent with the character of rural and resource areas.

Rural Areas. Rural lands will not develop urban service levels or characteristics, or accommodate a great deal of residential or employment growth. These areas are expected to retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities in the region over the long term. VISION 2040 calls for reduced rural population growth rates in all counties. Rural population and employment growth in the *Regional Growth Strategy* represents a reduction in the share of growth compared to current adopted growth targets for the year 2025. If they must identify growth for rural areas at all, counties should be encouraged to plan for even lower growth — where possible — than contained in the *Regional Growth Strategy*.

Rural Areas (1,464 square miles): All four counties have designated rural areas, which represent nearly 25 percent of the region's land area.



Port Gamble, Kitsap County

Natural Resource Lands. Lands designated as agriculture, forest, and mineral areas are grouped together as natural resource areas. Resource lands will be permanently protected from incompatible residential and employment growth to safeguard them as important economic, cultural, and environmental assets, and to protect the long-term viability of resource-based industries. Even small amounts of residential growth in these areas can seriously interfere with productive natural resource harvest and processing. Fragmentation of large, contiguous acreages through subdivision is also of particular concern. These areas will not accommodate significant future growth, and the *Regional Growth Strategy* does not distribute population or employment to them.

Natural Resource Lands (3,863 square miles): Natural resource lands, representing 60 percent of the region's land area, have also been designated.



Pierce County

Conclusion

The *Regional Growth Strategy* envisions Metropolitan, Core, and Larger Cities playing a stronger role in accommodating forecast growth to help relieve development pressure on rural and natural resource lands. New targets will be developed that consider local circumstances and conditions. Some cities may need to reexamine their regional and local roles and approaches to accommodating growth in order to plan for the pattern of growth presented in the strategy.

The region's multicounty planning policies, presented in Part III, are designed to implement the *Regional Growth Strategy*. These policies guide countywide planning policies and local comprehensive plans, helping to ensure that various planning efforts work together to achieve the region's vision for 2040.

(Detailed background information and county-level detail for the guidance contained in the *Regional Growth Strategy* are contained in a technical report: *Regional Growth Strategy Background*.)