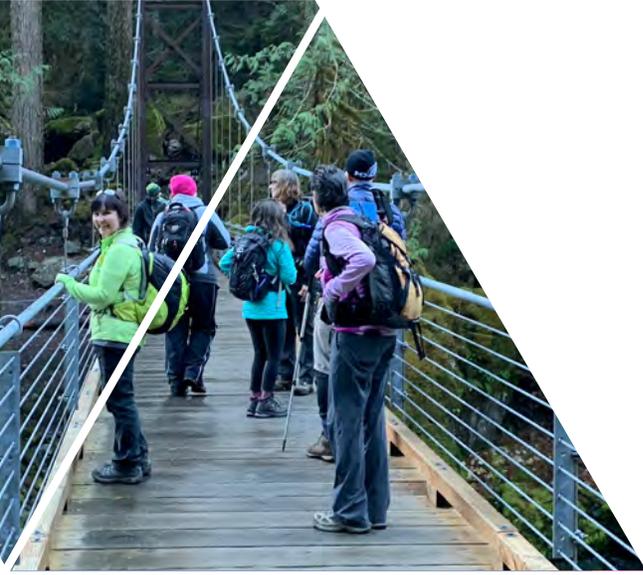


# VISION 2050 PLANNING RESOURCES

Guidance for Growth Targets to Implement VISION 2050



March 2021

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## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Part I: Data Assumptions and Methodology</b> .....	2
Planning Horizon .....	2
County Control Totals .....	4
Office of Financial Management 2022 GMA Population Projections .....	5
Employment Targets .....	5
Housing Targets .....	6
<b>Part II Growth and Policy Factors</b> .....	7
Translating County Control Totals to Regional Geographies .....	7
General Planning Considerations .....	10
Front and Back-Loaded Growth .....	11
Jobs-Housing Balance .....	11
Access to Opportunity and Housing Affordability .....	13
Centers and High Capacity Transit Station Areas .....	13
Urban Unincorporated Areas .....	17
Growth on Tribal Reservation Lands and Major Military Installations .....	18
Reconciliation Processes .....	19
<b>Review and Implementation</b> .....	19
<b>Other Regional &amp; County Resources</b> .....	21
<b>Appendix A: Best Practice Methodology for Housing Targets</b> .....	22
<b>Appendix B: Growth Target Statutory and Policy References</b> .....	23

## Figures

Figure 1 Regional Growth Strategy – Population Growth 2017–2044 (Illustrative) .....	3
Figure 2 Regional Growth Strategy – Employment Growth 2017–2044 (Illustrative) .....	3
Figure 3 Regional Growth Strategy County Population and Employment Control Totals 2017–2044 (Illustrative) .....	5
Figure 4 Regional Growth Strategy 2020–50 Housing Unit by Regional Geography .....	7
Figure 5 VISION 2050 Regional Geographies .....	9
Figure 6 Regional Growth Strategy Jobs-Housing Balance .....	12
Figure 7 Regional Jobs-Housing Ratios (2019) .....	13
Figure 8 Displacement Risk and Access to Opportunity in Seattle’s Growth Framework .....	13
Figure 9 Distribution of Land Area in Current and Planned High-Capacity .....	14
Figure 10 Distribution of Centers/HCT Geography Land Area by Mode Type .....	15
Figure 11 Regional Centers Typology .....	16
Figure 12 Minimum Growth Goals for Designated Regional Centers .....	17

## Introduction

Under the Growth Management Act, counties, in consultation with cities, are responsible for adopting 20-year growth targets. These growth targets are a key input to local comprehensive plans, ensuring that each county is accommodating population and employment growth. Jurisdictions use growth targets to inform land use, transportation, and capital facilities in their comprehensive plans.

VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy provides regional guidance for the distribution of population and employment growth within the four-county central Puget Sound region to support regional goals, such as aligning growth with investments in infrastructure, supporting regional mobility, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting job growth and economic development. Recognizing that communities will grow in different ways, the Regional Growth Strategy defines a role for different types of places in accommodating the region's population and employment growth. VISION 2050 calls for a consistent process to develop growth targets, including translating population to housing units.

VISION 2050 directs PSRC to work with its member jurisdictions to provide guidance and support the countywide efforts to set housing and employment targets and targets for regional centers:

**RGS-Action-3 Growth Targets:** PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will provide guidance and participate with countywide processes that set or modify local housing and employment targets. This effort will include consideration of the timing of Regional Growth Strategy implementation in relation to anticipated completion of regional transit investments and corresponding market responses. PSRC will also provide guidance on growth targets for designated regional centers and improving jobs-housing balance, and coordinate with member jurisdictions regarding buildable lands reporting.

This document provides guidance on both common data/methodology questions and policy items related to VISION 2050 implementation. Identifying common data practices across the counties ensures that collectively we are implementing the Regional Growth Strategy, allows for more regionally consistent targets, and clarifies the process for jurisdictions, particularly those that cross county lines.

Objectives for the guidance:

- Effectively implement the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy
- Provide best practices and coordination on common methodology issues to support a more consistent approach to growth targets across the region
- Support data and policy-informed countywide decisions about growth targets for individual jurisdictions

## Terminology

The Growth Management Act and some of the countywide planning policies use both the term “targets” and “allocations” to refer to the countywide process for the numeric distribution of growth among local jurisdictions for planning purposes. Following VISION 2050, this guidance uses the term “allocation” to refer to the Regional Growth Strategy and “growth target” to refer to the countywide processes to assign growth to individual jurisdictions and communities.

There are several policy areas to draw from in developing this guidance. The Growth Management Act, Washington Administrative Code, and decisions of the Growth Management Hearings Board provide parameters to guide the development of growth targets. The “numeric guidance” of the Regional Growth Strategy refers to the percent shares of forecast regional population and employment growth for 2017–2050 allocated across counties and their regional geographies. Narrative in VISION 2050 provides background and regional context for local and county review of growth numbers and the objectives for each regional geography.

VISION 2050 also includes policies, actions and guidance on aligning local plans with the Regional Growth Strategy. While VISION 2050 provides a broad regional framework, it recognizes that communities are unique and different approaches may be appropriate based on local circumstances. MPP-RGS-3 notes the need for flexibility in establishing and modifying growth targets within countywide planning policies, provided that growth targets support the Regional Growth Strategy. Recommendations provided in the guidance are intended to support implementation of VISION 2050 and to recognize that tailored approaches may be appropriate to account for local circumstances.

## **PART I: DATA ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

This section identifies common data and methodology questions in establishing growth targets in countywide planning policies.

### **Planning Horizon**

While the VISION 2050 planning horizon extends through the year 2050, it does not require local jurisdictions to set growth targets for 2050. Local jurisdictions will continue to plan under the 20-year planning horizon established under the Growth Management Act. All jurisdictions in the central Puget Sound have the same June 2024 deadline for state-required periodic updates to comprehensive plans and, therefore, should have the same planning horizon extending 20 years.

**Recommendation for Planning Horizon:** Align targets to a 2044 planning horizon. Comprehensive plans must plan for 20 years of growth, and 2044 horizon sets a common year, consistent with deadlines established under state law. Counties should choose a base year based on the most recent data available [2020 data recommended, where possible].

The legislature has extended the deadline in previous planning cycles, creating confusion among growth target horizon years. Any future changes to comprehensive plan horizons should be coordinated among the counties.

The following table provides an estimate of the Regional Growth Strategy allocations for the 2017-2044 period. The estimates were developed from 2044 growth, household, and group quarter assumptions in the regional macroeconomic forecast.

### **Growth Management Hearings Board**

The Hearings Board has addressed growth targets in several cases, and provides some additional insight on their role:

“RCW 36.70A.110 imposes a consistent and ongoing duty for all GMA jurisdictions to accommodate the ensuing growth periodically projected by OFM and allocated [by the counties]. Simply put, so long as the state and region continue to grow, counties and cities must continue to plan for, manage, and accommodate the projected and allocated growth.” [Kaleas, 05-3-0007c, FDO, at 11-12.]

“[A]ccommodating the growth allocated to meet a one-time projected 20-year target does not extinguish a city’s GMA obligations [per .110].” [Camwest III, 05-3-0041, FDO, at 14.]

Figure 1 Regional Growth Strategy — Population Growth 2017–2044 (Illustrative)

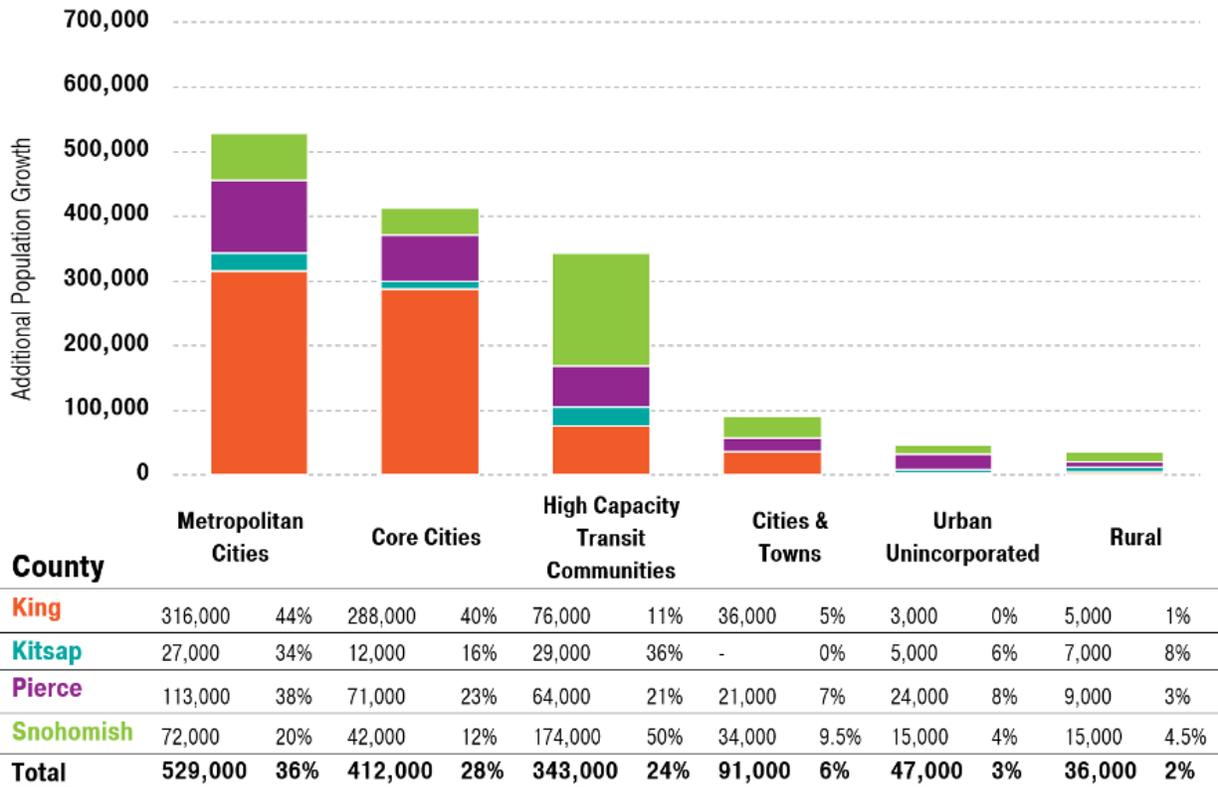
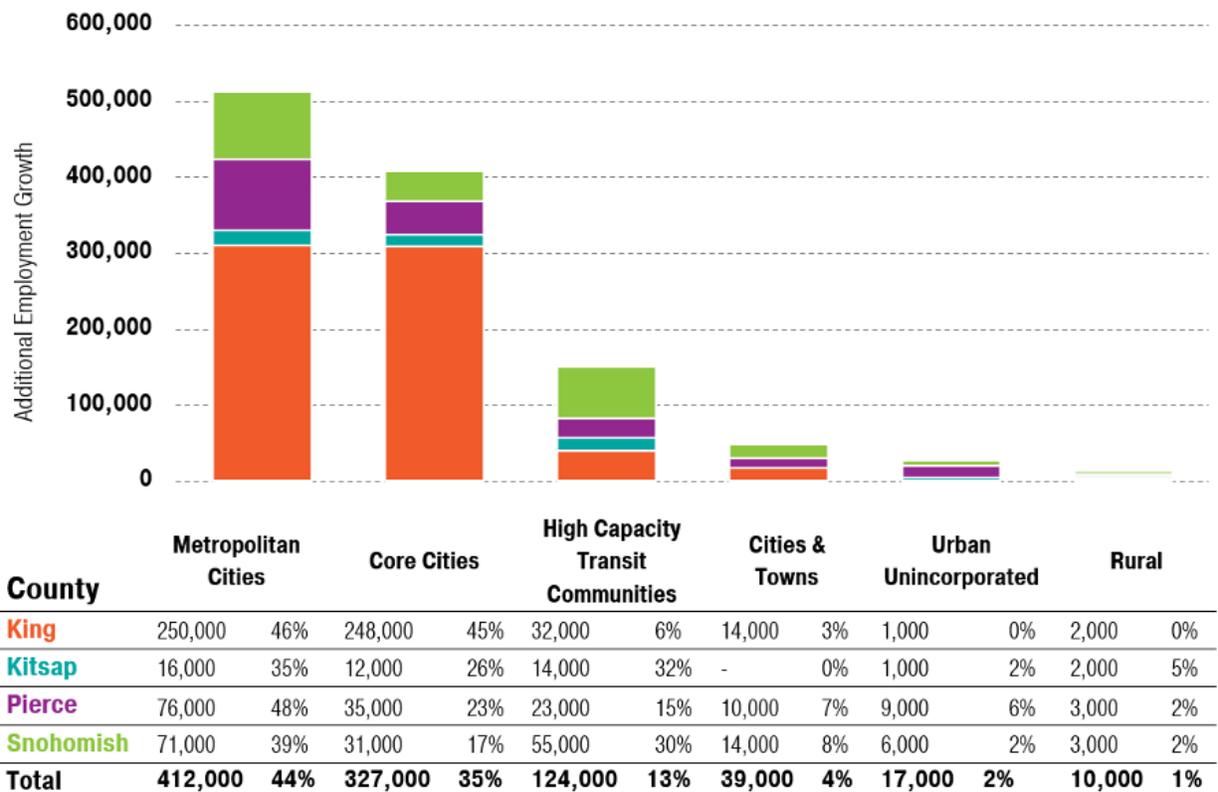


Figure 2 Regional Growth Strategy — Employment Growth 2017–2044 (Illustrative)



## County Control Totals

The first step in developing growth targets is identifying the total amount of growth expected for the county. The county population total is critical for allocating growth to individual cities and unincorporated areas. RCW 43.62.035 directs the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to provide a range of high, medium and low twenty-year population forecasts for each county in the state, with the medium forecast being most likely. Counties and cities must plan for a total countywide population that falls within the OFM range.

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 365-196-310(4)) provides guidance about selecting the overall county population projection. Among other factors, it states the process to select a countywide total should include:

“Consideration of other population forecast data, trends, and implications. In selecting population forecasts, counties and cities may consider the following:

- Population forecasts from outside agencies, such as regional or metropolitan planning agencies, and service providers.”

The Regional Growth Strategy includes county-level growth allocations based on the regional macroeconomic forecast and expected county-level distribution based on the Office of Financial Management GMA projections. PSRC’s macroeconomic forecast includes the region’s households, persons, jobs, and other economic and demographic variables through the year 2050. PSRC’s 2018 macroeconomic forecast for total regional population growth is generally consistent with preliminary state-level projections for 2050 that were released in 2017, though it estimates slightly higher population in the region in both 2040 and 2050. OFM does not produce a long-range employment forecast for GMA planning purposes.

The overall Regional Growth Strategy is based on improving regional job-housing balance and included shifts in planned employment to balance population growth in each county. Given this regional distribution of jobs and population was central to development of the Regional Growth Strategy, it is critical to coordinate regionally on the overall county assumptions for population and employment.

**Recommendation for County Control Totals:** To promote jobs-housing balance and regional consistency, aim to be consistent with overall county controls in VISION 2050. If needed, deviations from the total population or employment county control totals should support an improved jobs-housing balance and be coordinated among the counties. This could include planning for additional population growth in King County or additional employment growth in Pierce, Snohomish, or Kitsap counties. If a county chooses to deviate from the county control totals in VISION 2050, the supporting materials for the growth targets should outline the rationale for using the regional macroeconomic forecast as a guide and rationale for any deviations consistent with the overall objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy.

**Figure 3 Regional Growth Strategy County Population and Employment Control Totals 2017–2044 (Illustrative)**

	POPULATION		EMPLOYMENT	
	Total	% Share	Total	% Share
King	724,000	50%	547,000	59%
Kitsap	80,000	5%	45,000	5%
Pierce	302,000	21%	157,000	17%
Snohomish	353,000	24%	180,000	19%
<b>Region</b>	<b>1,458,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>930,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Office of Financial Management 2022 GMA Population Projections**

OFM is next scheduled to release updated GMA projections in late 2022. Given the local planning schedule in the central Puget Sound where periodic updates are due to be completed by June 2024, this provides limited opportunity to make changes and coordinate regionally on changes to population allocations.

The OFM GMA projections have historically been sensitive to economic shifts, and the global pandemic and subsequent economic downturn create significant uncertainties in near-term growth. Due to the late timing of the 2022 release, changing county control totals after the OFM release would likely disrupt the local comprehensive planning process. Regardless of whether the 2022 projection changes, the totals identified in the regional macroeconomic forecast are very likely to remain within the low-to-high projection range.

**Recommendation for 2022 OFM Population Projections:** Counties should proceed with developing growth targets in 2020/2021, based on the macroeconomic forecast in VISION 2050. When the Office of Financial Management releases updated population forecasts in 2022, ensure the county control total used to develop population targets remains within the OFM range. The need for coordinated growth in the central Puget Sound places a high priority on consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy while remaining within the parameters of state law. If the 2022 projections suggest adjusting the county control totals, any such changes should be coordinated through all four counties working together. PSRC’s Land Use Technical Advisory Committee will provide a forum for discussion and coordination if significant changes to the OFM projections or future updates to PSRC’s macroeconomic forecast warrant revisiting of county control totals. Consideration of changes due to the 2022 OFM projection should occur through countywide planning forums before making adjustments to targets for individual communities.

**Employment Targets**

Each county in the region establishes employment targets consistent with the direction of VISION 2050 (MPP-RGS-2). Employment targets help cities and counties plan for employment based-uses and plan to improve jobs-housing balance across the region, a key objective of VISION 2050.

The Washington Administrative Code (WAC 365-196-310(4)) provides the following guidance on employment forecasts:

“Selection of a county-wide employment forecast. Counties, in consultation with cities, should adopt a twenty-year county-wide employment forecast to be allocated among urban growth areas, cities, and the rural area. The following should be considered in this process:

- (A) The county-wide population forecast, and the resulting ratio of forecast jobs to persons. This ratio should be compared to past levels locally and other regions, and to desired policy objectives; and
- (B) Economic trends and forecasts produced by outside agencies or private sources.”

**Recommendation for Employment Targets:** Use a county control total for employment that is consistent with the VISION 2050 county allocations to ensure regional consistency and promote jobs/housing balance. If needed, deviation from the VISION 2050 county totals should support an improved regional jobs/housing balance and VISION 2050 policy objectives and should be coordinated among the counties.

Previous rounds of growth targets were informed by PSRC’s Small Area Forecast, which did not include projections of construction/resource jobs. PSRC’s current Macroeconomic Forecast includes forecasts of total employment, including construction/resource jobs, which makes an adjustment for construction/resource jobs no longer necessary. Counties are encouraged to adopt employment targets that include construction/resource jobs.

**Other data resources:**

- [Current local employment estimates and trends](#)
- [PSRC 2018 Macroeconomic Forecast, including forecast for industry sectors](#)

**Housing Targets**

VISION 2050 states that counties should establish local housing targets based on population projections (MPP-RGS-2). Translating population to housing is a critical step in recognizing and planning for regional housing needs and ensuring that local land use plans are sufficient to accommodate the projected population target.

**Recommendations for Housing Targets:**

- Counties are encouraged to use the methodology developed by LUTAC to translate population to housing targets [see Appendix A]. The methodology considers countywide housing need as a first step, uses consistent household size appropriate for each county and regional geography, and creates a common set of assumptions to develop housing targets.
- The Regional Growth Strategy is for total population inclusive of group quarter population. For purposes of translating population targets into housing units, housing targets should focus on household population excluding group quarter population, per the methodology provided in Appendix A. The most recent group quarters information can be used with an adjustment for anticipated growth.
- Some counties adopt both population and housing targets for jurisdictions. Where both sets of targets are available, jurisdictions are strongly encouraged to use adopted housing targets in countywide planning policies to ensure that the housing needs identified at the countywide level are fully addressed in local targets and plans.
- Counties may consider establishing more detailed affordable housing targets aimed at proactively planning for below-market units. If adopted, affordable housing targets should be consistent with overall countywide and local housing targets.

PSRC’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment includes a translation of the Regional Growth Strategy into housing units. This translation (see Figure 4) uses the methodology provided in Appendix A. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment finds that the region underbuilt housing over the last decade, relative to population growth. The recommended method to translate population to housing accounts for the current backlog because it is based on total population and household size by the end of the planning period. While the methodology accounts for the current backlog over the long term, the region is currently experiencing a housing affordability crisis, and jurisdictions should take short-term action to encourage housing development and plan to address the affordability gaps at all levels while also being consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

**Figure 4 Regional Growth Strategy 2020-50 Housing Unit by Regional Geography (Illustrative)**

	METROPOLITAN CITIES	CORE CITIES	HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT COMMUNITIES	CITIES & TOWNS	URBAN UNINCORP.	RURAL	TOTAL
King	194,200	158,000	42,400	18,400	1,600	3,400	418,000
Kitsap	14,200	6,700	15,300	-	2,800	3,500	42,600
Pierce	63,900	41,200	32,100	10,600	9,100	3,900	160,800
Snohomish	42,400	22,400	91,900	16,300	6,900	6,700	186,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>314,700</b>	<b>228,300</b>	<b>181,700</b>	<b>45,300</b>	<b>20,400</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>807,900</b>

**PART II: GROWTH AND POLICY FACTORS**

This section outlines additional technical and policy-related factors to allocate growth to individual jurisdictions.

**Translating County Control Totals to Regional Geographies**

VISION 2050 provides guidance on shares and roles of different regional geographies.

- **Metropolitan and Core Cities** include cities that have designated regional growth centers. Most are also connected to the region’s high-capacity transit system or will see new investments in the future. These two groups of cities are and will be the most intensely urban places in the region. 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 in the countywide growth targets, while aiming for a better balance of jobs and housing.
- **High Capacity Transit Communities** are cities and unincorporated areas that are connected to the regional high-capacity transit system. These urban unincorporated areas are also planned for annexation or incorporation. Historical growth targets may not be as useful a guide for these jurisdictions compared to some cities. In many cases, transit investments represent new, future opportunities to accommodate growth.

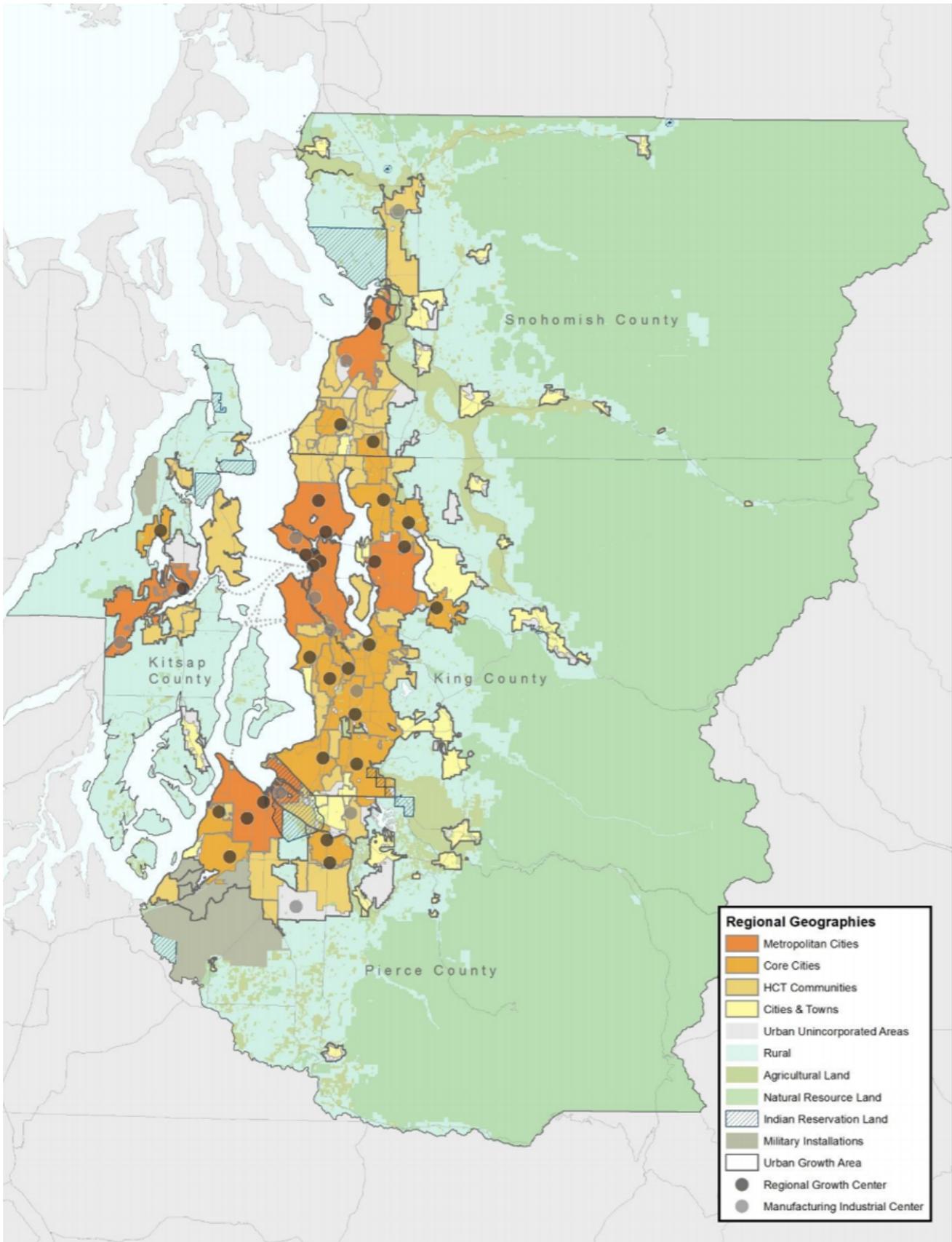
- **Cities and Towns** are cities and towns with smaller downtown and local centers, which may be served by local transit.
- **Urban Unincorporated Areas** capture a wide variety of urban lands, both lightly and heavily developed. These areas may be served by local transit and may include areas identified as potential annexation or incorporation areas.
- **Rural Areas and Natural Resources Lands** describe the different types of unincorporated areas outside the urban growth area and include very low-density housing, working landscapes, and open space. VISION 2050 calls for reduced rural population growth rates in all counties. Counties are encouraged to plan for even lower growth—where possible—than contained in the Regional Growth Strategy.

Compared to historical trends, Metropolitan, Core, and High Capacity Transit Communities are planned for higher levels of growth in the Regional Growth Strategy. Other geographies are planned for more modest levels of growth. In several of these geographies, additional capacity for housing and jobs may be necessary to accommodate growth in this planning period.

**Recommendation for Regional Geographies:** Achieve substantial consistency with shares identified for each regional geography identified in VISION 2050. Deviations from the regional geography shares should be reasonably expected to be achieved through backloaded growth beyond the planning period to 2050. Counties are encouraged to identify opportunities to implement the guidance in VISION 2050 that Metropolitan cities could plan for higher levels of growth and Rural areas could plan for lower levels of growth than specified by the Regional Growth Strategy.



Figure 5 VISION 2050 Regional Geographies



## General Planning Considerations

As targets are determined for individual cities and unincorporated areas within a single regional geography, there are several factors and questions that may be considered. For reference, the Washington Administrative Code WAC 365-196-310 (4)(a)(iii) – (vii) identifies several of these factors:

- **Existing growth targets and progress.** Has a jurisdiction grown more or less than expected during the previous round of growth targets? Jurisdictions that have been able to accommodate growth may continue these trends into the future.
- **Historic and recent development trends.** Where has growth been occurring in the county? Have trends shifted since the last round of growth targets were set?
- **Vested development projects.** Are known projects in the pipeline that should be considered?
- **Zoned development capacity.** Where is there existing capacity for new urban growth in the county? While many areas are being planned for additional growth in VISION 2050 that have not yet zoned for additional capacity, existing capacity could be a factor to consider in establishing growth targets. Relative distribution of capacity can inform targets but isn't a fixed constraint — cities are expected to continue to accommodate growth over time. Changing circumstances, such as major infrastructure investments, may necessitate a new and expanded role for jurisdictions in accommodating growth.
- **Availability and capacity of transportation and other infrastructure.** Where is existing and planned infrastructure to accommodate new growth? The WAC cautions that ability to pay for urban infrastructure should be a consideration in how much growth to expect. Some jurisdictions have known limitations of future water availability or sewer service – these factors should inform establishing reasonable targets for growth. On the other hand, major regional investments in light rail present new opportunities for some communities to accommodate growth.
- **“Fair share” distribution.** Are jurisdictions sharing the responsibility to accommodate future growth? The GMA framework supports interjurisdictional cooperation and recognizes a shared responsibility across each county for accommodating new growth.
- **Location within the county.**
  - **Employment distribution.** Employers and industries generally cluster together and seek access to infrastructure and transportation facilities, including ports or other distribution networks. Do growth targets support known employment distribution patterns?
  - **Transportation and distance from job centers.** Will the distribution of growth targets help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reducing vehicle miles traveled between residential areas and job centers? In addition to the Regional Growth Strategy, VISION 2050 supports regional and state goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation is a main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, and the location of job centers and existing commute patterns should inform the distribution of growth.
  - **Environment.** Are some areas more appropriate for growth in the context of other environmental factors? Environmental features play a role in distributing growth within individual jurisdictions but could also shape the total amount of planned growth.

## Front and Back-Loaded Growth

VISION 2050 provides a planning horizon six years beyond the recommended 2044 growth targets. A first step may be to consider a 2044 target level based on assuming a straight-line path to 2050. In some instances, it may be appropriate to account for higher or lower shares for regional geographies within a county than allocated in the Regional Growth Strategy in targets (referred to as “front-loaded” or “back-loaded” growth) to acknowledge that growth often is not linear and may be expected to accelerate or slow over time. VISION 2050 assumes that the region will ultimately achieve the growth allocations in the Regional Growth Strategy by 2050, even with assumptions for slightly higher or lower growth allocation through 2044.

Some factors which are especially relevant in front-loading or back-loading growth include:

- Major transit or other infrastructure investments. Some Sound Transit projects will be completed in the next few years while others will not be complete until 2041. This could shift market response to early or late in the planning period. Other major transportation or utility infrastructure may shape development patterns. For example, planned upgrades or known limitations of water or sewer utility may shift when growth is expected to occur.
- The timing of major planned developments. Major planned developments permitted under development agreements come online in larger and more predictable phases than typical housing and employment development.
- Current development patterns. In some geographies, the Regional Growth Strategy assumes a notably different development trajectory than current trends. For example, Core Cities across all counties have more ambitious goals for growth than current trends. Except for King County, Metropolitan cities are also expected to ramp up growth over time. Given the timing of transit investments, some of that growth may take place later in the planning period.

Recent updates to the Buildable Lands statute (RCW 36.70A.215) require an analysis of growth targets to understand when growth targets and assumptions are not being achieved. In the context of backloading, that statute notes, “It is not appropriate to make a finding that assumed growth contained in the countywide planning policies and the county or city comprehensive plan will occur at the end of the current comprehensive planning twenty-year planning cycle without rationale.” To facilitate review, counties should recognize and document any rationale for front or back-loading growth as part of targets documentation, including why it is reasonable to expect that regional geographies can achieve the Regional Growth Strategy shares by 2050.

## Jobs-Housing Balance

VISION 2050 emphasizes the importance of improving the balance of jobs and housing to support regional mobility, access to living-wage jobs, and affordable housing. Without adequate housing near jobs, people find themselves living further away and making longer commutes. This can be exacerbated when housing is available, but unaffordable to the workers employed in the area.

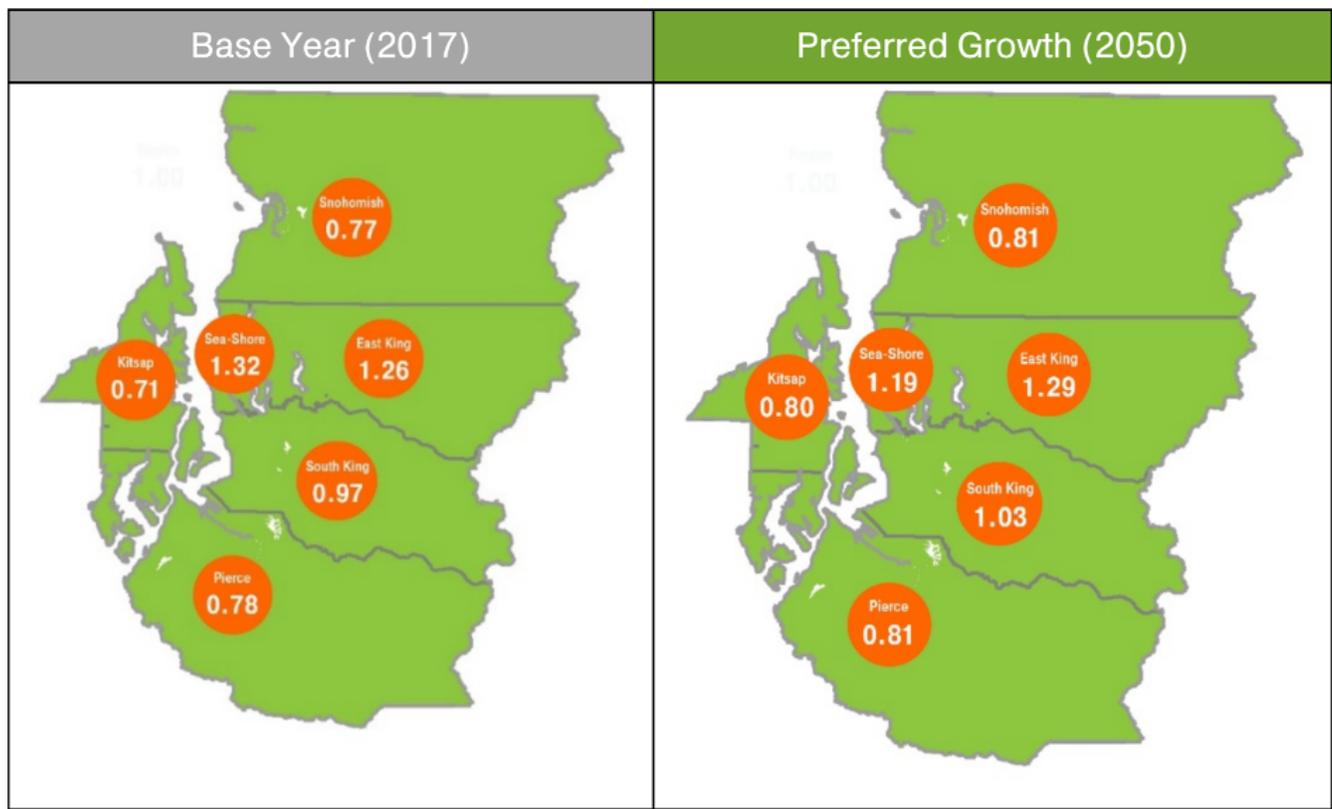
In establishing growth targets, counties, in consultation with cities, should consider jobs-housing balance across larger subareas when establishing growth targets. VISION 2050 includes an action specifically on jobs-housing balance in the growth targets:

RGS-Action-8 Plan for Jobs-Housing Balance: Countywide planning organizations will consider data on jobs-housing balance, especially recent and projected employment growth within Metropolitan and Core cities, to set housing growth targets that substantially improve jobs-housing balance consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Metropolitan and Core cities experiencing high job growth will take measures to provide additional housing capacity for a range of housing types and affordability levels to meet the needs of those workers as well as the needs of existing residents who may be at risk of displacement.

The VISION 2050 action focuses on housing growth near job centers to address risk of displacement. Jobs-housing balance should be a countywide consideration in developing targets. The countywide process should also consider subareas and individual jurisdictions with long-term imbalance of jobs and housing in establishing targets.

Jobs-housing ratios in the [VISION 2050 Final Supplemental EIS](#) estimate long-term imbalances of jobs and housing across King County subareas, which could be improved with more proactive local planning.

**Figure 6 Regional Growth Strategy Jobs-Housing Balance**



The maps provided above are based on an index of jobs and housing by subarea, compared to a regional average.

**Figure 7 Regional Jobs-Housing Ratios (2019)**

COUNTY	EMPLOYMENT	HOUSING	JOBS-HOUSING RATIO
King County	1,529,000	956,000	1.60
East King	432,000	251,000	1.72
Sea-Shore	702,000	400,000	1.75
South King	396,000	305,000	1.30
Kitsap County	111,000	114,000	0.98
Pierce County	377,000	353,000	1.07
Snohomish County	323,000	317,000	1.02
<b>Region</b>	<b>2,341,000</b>	<b>1,740,000</b>	<b>1.35</b>

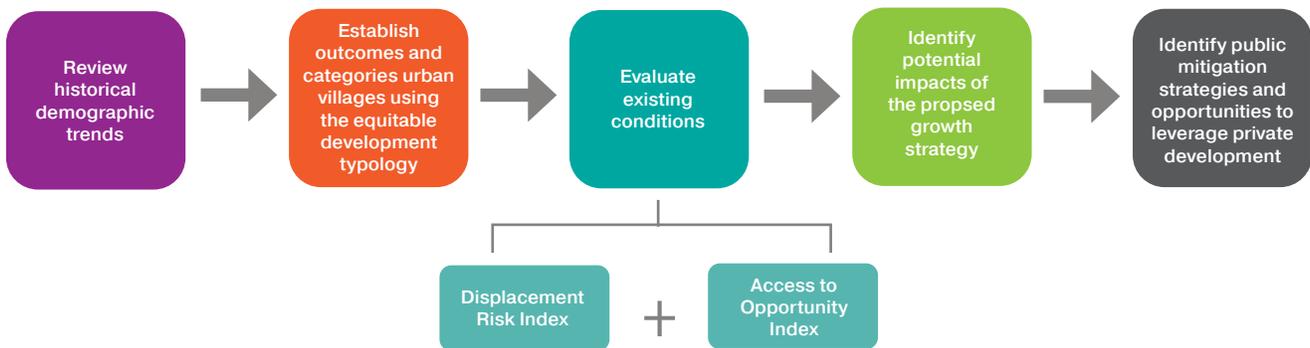
**Access to Opportunity and Housing Affordability**

VISION 2050 supports equitable growth that minimizes displacement and expands access to opportunity. Regional resources are available to support consideration of housing affordability and social equity in establishing growth targets:

- [Opportunity Mapping](#)
- [Displacement Risk Mapping](#)
- [Regional Housing Needs Assessment](#)

At the city level, [Seattle](#) has used displacement risk and access to opportunity to shape how much growth is allocated to individual centers and subareas. These data resources can also be used to consider how growth is allocated among jurisdictions within each regional geography.

**Figure 8 Displacement Risk and Access to Opportunity in Seattle’s Growth Framework**



Source: Seattle 2035 Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle’s Growth Strategy

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment will provide additional data and perspective on future housing need, providing further detail besides the total number of units needed in the region. This project may be able to inform how growth targets are translated to local planning

**Centers and High Capacity Transit Station Areas**

Both regional centers and investments in high-capacity transit represent critical opportunities to accommodate new growth. VISION 2050 and the [Regional Centers Framework](#) includes specific growth goals for both types of places.

## Regional High-Capacity Transit Goal

VISION 2050 includes a goal of 65% of population growth and 75% of job growth to occur in centers and near high-capacity transit stations (MPP-RGS-8). Achieving this goal will help bring people and jobs closer together and provide people with greater transportation access to other jobs centers. That goal applies regionally and is based on assumptions that vary in each county.

VISION 2050 defines high-capacity transit station areas as parcels within a half-mile walk of existing/planned light rail and streetcar stations, commuter rail stations, and ferry terminals in the region's designated urban growth areas (UGA), and within a quarter-mile walk of existing/planned bus rapid transit stations in the UGA.

King County has significantly more current and planned high-capacity transit investments than other counties, but each has a role to play in encouraging new growth near transit.

**Figure 9 Distribution of Land Area in Current and Planned High-Capacity**

	<b>ACRES IN CENTERS AND TRANSIT STATION AREAS</b>	<b>SHARE OF REGION</b>
<b>King</b>	51,615	71%
<b>Kitsap</b>	2,791	4%
<b>Pierce</b>	10,735	15%
<b>Snohomish</b>	7,708	11%
<b>Region</b>	<b>72,849</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: PSRC VISION 2050 Alternatives Background Paper analysis

**Recommendation for HCT Goal:** While the goal in VISION is region-wide, counties should seek to implement the centers and high-capacity goal through the growth targets. Counties should consider the distribution and relative share of high-capacity transit areas within each jurisdiction when developing targets.

## Transit Timing, Mode, Access and Market Response

Different modes and transit investments elicit varying levels of market response. Research has identified that fixed transit investments more readily catalyze the real estate market and help attract housing and job growth. Modes such as light rail are likely to promote and support high levels of development and provide high quality service for residents. Higher-cost transit systems (such as light rail) require higher densities to encourage the kind of frequent use to support the overall system.

The [Regional Centers Market Study](#) (2016) identified several important factors related to significant growth in centers. These factors are similar for both designated regional growth centers and other mixed-use areas served by transit and indicate that some centers and transit station areas are better situated to accommodate future growth than others. Factors include:

- Large firms are more likely to locate in large and well-developed urban centers.
- Service sector-oriented centers grow faster. Industries and firms oriented around large, global markets tend to drive growth in centers.

- Transportation accessibility to regional concentrations of jobs facilitates urban center growth. Location in the region and accessibility, particularly by transit, to other centers is an important factor for both employment and population growth in centers.
- Employment growth leads population growth in centers.
- Sufficient zoning capacity reduces barriers to residential and job development. Limited zoned development capacity can be a barrier to employment and population growth.
- More walkable centers will likely experience faster employment and residential growth.

**Recommendation for Transit Characteristics:** Counties should consider transit service characteristics, location, and urban form in allocating growth between jurisdictions served by high-capacity transit. Targets should take into account multiple dimensions of transit access and timing, which may vary among cities and unincorporated areas within each regional geography.

The following graphic shows where growth is distributed among high capacity transit areas. To avoid double-counting, transit types are arranged as a hierarchy from left to right. For example, if a location is served by both light rail and bus rapid transit, it is counted in the light rail data in the chart below. Some portions of regional growth centers are not served by any type of high capacity transit and are categorized below as “remaining RGC areas.”

**Figure 10 Distribution of Centers/HCT Geography Land Area by Mode Type**

	ALL LIGHT RAIL	REMAINING COMMUTER RAIL	REMAINING FERRY	REMAINING BRT	REMAINING RGC AREA	TOTAL TOD AREAS
<b>King</b>	27%	1%	0%	65%	6%	100%
<b>Kitsap</b>	0%	0%	38%	32%	30%	100%
<b>Pierce</b>	33%	10%	0%	38%	19%	100%
<b>Snohomish</b>	16%	4%	0%	66%	15%	100%
<b>Region</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: PSRC VISION 2050 Alternatives Background Paper

PSRC’s guidance on [Transit-Supportive Densities and Land Uses](#) (2015) also provides information on densities and transit modes that support development activity.

**Regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers**

VISION 2050 calls for regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers to accommodate a significant share of the region’s growth (MPP-RGS-9, RGS-10).

**Recommendations for Regional Centers:**

- Under the [Regional Centers Framework](#), there are tailored growth expectations for different types of centers. PSRC has completed the [typology of regional centers](#). Targets should be sufficient to enable jurisdictions to reach their regional center density goals; insufficient targets for cities with regional centers could jeopardize the regional center designation. Some regional centers already exceed the minimum density standard. These centers are still expected to accommodate a significant share of their jurisdiction’s growth.

Figure 11 Regional Centers Typology



**Figure 12 Minimum Growth Goals for Designated Regional Centers**

REGIONAL CENTER TYPE	MINIMUM PLANNING GOAL	OTHER NOTES
Urban Growth Center	45 activity units per acre	Minimum mix of at least 15% planned residential and employment activity in the center
Metro Growth Center	85 activity units per acre	Minimum mix of at least 15% planned residential and employment activity in the center
Industrial Growth Center	10,000 total jobs	-
Industrial Employment Center	20,000 total jobs	-

- Some jurisdictions have more than one designated regional center. These jurisdictions may warrant higher growth allocations than other cities within their regional geography.
- Unlike regional growth centers, designated MICs are not part of the criteria used to establish regional geographies in VISION 2050. However, these centers are planned for additional growth, and growth targets for jurisdictions with MICs should reflect appropriate levels of employment growth.

**Countywide centers and local centers**

The Regional Centers Framework provides a framework to designate new countywide centers that can successfully accommodate new growth. VISION 2050 also encourages growth in designated countywide centers (MPP-RGS- 11). Jurisdictions with countywide centers may warrant higher growth allocations to accommodate new growth in these areas.

**Urban Unincorporated Areas**

VISION 2050 encourages phasing and prioritizing growth in unincorporated areas planned for annexation or incorporation. VISION 2050 recognizes that urban unincorporated areas have different existing conditions and plans. Urban unincorporated areas are included in two different regional geographies:

- **High-Capacity Transit Communities.** Cities and unincorporated areas that are connected to regional high-capacity transit system. These urban unincorporated areas are also planned for annexation or incorporation.
- **Urban Unincorporated.** Urban areas that may be served by local transit but are either not yet planned for annexation or incorporation and/or not yet planned for high-capacity transit

VISION 2050 envisions that, over time, unincorporated area inside the urban growth area will be fully annexed to or incorporated as cities. Careful planning and phased development of the unincorporated portions of the urban growth area are vital to ensure that these areas assume appropriate urban densities and an urban form that supports the efficient provision of future transit and urban services and facilitates annexation or incorporation.

**Recommendation for Urban Unincorporated Areas:** Growth targets for urban unincorporated areas in both regional geographies should be informed by their annexation or incorporation status and opportunities to phase growth in these areas.

## Growth on Tribal Reservation Lands and Major Military Installations

It may be appropriate in growth targets to acknowledge known growth forecasts and major planned developments on tribal reservation lands or military installations.

These areas plan differently than local governments and are not subject to the planning requirements of the Growth Management Act. However, VISION 2050 recognizes their important roles in the region and their influence on regional growth patterns.

### Major Military Installations

Military installations play an important role in the central Puget Sound region's economy. Washington state has one of the highest concentrations of military personnel claiming residence, with the majority of personnel located at installations in the central Puget Sound region. Nine installations of various sizes are located in the region. Installations are not required to plan under the Growth Management Act, and the Regional Growth Strategy does not allocate forecasted regional employment growth to these areas, though existing levels of military employment are included in regional modeling.

OFM GMA population projections designate 'special populations' including military populations in their models to account for military personnel. The OFM projections assume that bases are unlikely to be downsized because of their strategic location and importance. PSRC's forecast similarly assumes existing levels of activity at military installations will continue in the future.

Installations serve as hubs for both employment and population, and it is important to work together on growth planning in and around bases.

**Recommendation for Major Military Installations:** Counties and cities should coordinate with military installations on growth planning issues, including any planned changes. While military installations are not formally part of the Growth Management Act framework and should not be assigned growth targets, supporting data and information presented with the growth targets can recognize existing activity or document major changes expected on bases.

### Indian Reservation Lands

As sovereign nations, each tribe has its own form of government, constitution or charter, laws and planning processes and are not subject to state planning requirements or the Growth Management Act. Because of this, the Regional Growth Strategy does not include population and employment growth allocations for these sovereign lands.

**Recommendation for Indian Reservation Lands:** Counties and cities should coordinate with tribal nations on growth planning issues, including how much growth tribal nations are forecasting and tracking on reservations in order to coordinate their planning policies and achieve consistency in regional planning. Growth on rural reservation lands is not included in rural regional geography allocations when tracking population and employment growth. While reservation lands are not formally part of the Growth Management Act framework and should not be assigned growth targets, supporting data and information presented with the growth targets can recognize existing activity or document major changes expected on reservation lands. Counties should seek to be consistent with the overall goals for rural growth in VISION 2050 when permitting new development on fee-simple reservation lands outside the urban growth area. Tribal governments may also have input on off-reservation growth patterns, which may affect their off-reservation interests.

## Reconciliation Processes

Counties, working with their cities, should strive to reach agreement on growth targets that are reasonable and achievable and where there is a commitment to plan for them in local comprehensive plan updates. A new action in VISION 2050 (RGS-Action-9) calls for countywide organizations to develop processes to reconcile any discrepancies between city and county adopted targets contained in local comprehensive plans, and that reconciliation processes should maintain consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy. Counties and cities can avoid the need for reconciliation by seeking agreement through the target-setting process, but any adjustments needed should be coordinated through the countywide process.

Snohomish County has long included a process for adjusting growth targets after comprehensive plan updates have been adopted to account for differences in growth target outcomes in local plans. Following the 2015 comprehensive plan update, Pierce County also adjusted the growth targets to account for misalignment between growth targets and capacity in some cities. Reconciliation may make sense when there are changes to transit investments or other circumstances unforeseen during growth target development.

A reconciliation process may require updates to the countywide planning policies to outline a process to adjust growth targets or to ensure that existing reconciliation processes are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

**Recommendation for Reconciliation:** Countywide planning organizations should identify a reconciliation process to address potential discrepancies. Reconciliation should maintain consistency with growth allocations within each regional geography and with VISION 2050 and avoid shifts of planned growth to regional geographies that are accommodating lower levels of growth in the Regional Growth Strategy.

Counties should also develop a process to address annexations and other technical adjustments to growth targets over time. King County countywide planning policies include a policy [King CPP-DP-12] permitting the Growth Management Planning Council to “[a]djust targets administratively upon annexation of unincorporated Potential Annexation Areas by cities.” Such changes may be necessary to support long-term planning by cities and orderly updates to the growth targets. This may be another useful approach for other counties to consider.

## Review and Implementation

Counties should consult this guidance, continue to engage with PSRC and other counties on methodology assumptions, and document their work and rationale for key decisions in the growth target process. PSRC provides a forum for coordination through the Land Use Technical Advisory Committee and the Regional Staff Committee. PSRC staff are available to provide data, technical assistance, and review throughout the target setting process.

PSRC will participate in the process and will formally review and comment on each update to growth targets prior to formal adoption. To facilitate this process, each county is asked to submit their draft growth targets along with a brief memo that explains consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy. PSRC will review countywide adoption of growth targets with recognition of good faith efforts to be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and VISION 2050 over the long-term. Targets should demonstrate how cities and counties are working towards the outcomes and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy. In some cases, growth targets may not fully align with the precise shares in the Regional Growth Strategy. For example, there are jurisdictions where high-capacity transit is planned to be built and operational late in the planning period, and higher growth rates may not occur until the last decades of VISION 2050.

For cities, VISION 2050 includes guidance on using land use assumptions consistent with the countywide growth targets in comprehensive plans. As local comprehensive plans are updated, land use growth assumptions used in plans should be consistent with adopted countywide growth targets and support implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy. Growth targets will be for a slightly longer period of time than the local comprehensive plan, given targets will generally use 2019 or 2020 as the base year. Where data is available, cities and counties can document and deduct actual growth that has occurred prior to 2024 in their comprehensive plan land use assumptions. In many instances, however, timely data to deduct actual growth may not be available prior to beginning work analyzing and modeling the growth assumptions in the plan. Unless major projects come online during this 2020 – 2024 time period that can be documented and make a substantial difference in growth assumptions, cities and counties should consider applying the growth targets in their plans as they have been adopted through the countywide process.

In its review of comprehensive plans for certification, PSRC looks for substantial consistency of the plan's land use growth assumptions with countywide-adopted growth targets. In addition to assessing that the land use growth assumptions are consistent with the growth targets and implementing the Regional Growth Strategy, PSRC review and certification looks broadly at all actions and measures taken in local comprehensive plans to implement VISION 2050 and achieve the regional growth shares.

For jurisdictions with regional growth centers, manufacturing/industrial centers or high-capacity transit stations, additions to this guidance later in 2021 will provide additional recommendations for setting targets at the sub-jurisdiction scale. Counties and cities with regional centers will be expected to include center targets in their adopted comprehensive plans, due in 2024.



## OTHER REGIONAL & COUNTY RESOURCES

There are several important data resources that have been referenced throughout this document.

### Forecast products:

- [PSRC 2018 Macroeconomic Forecast](#)
- [OFM 2017 Population Projections](#) (medium series)

### Population and employment data:

- [Census Bureau](#)
- [Office of Financial Management Population Estimates](#)
- [PSRC Employment Database](#)

### Other resources:

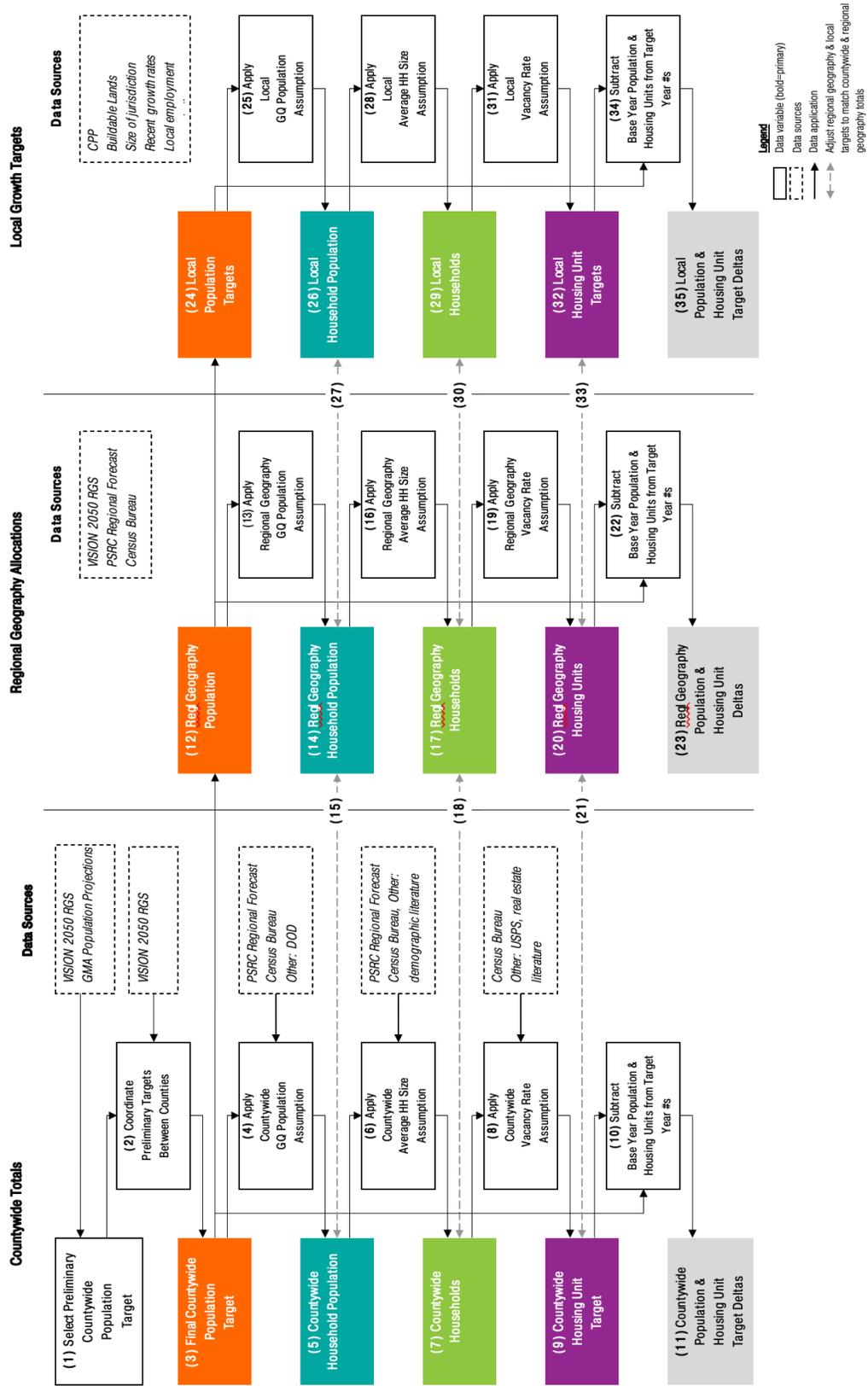
- [Opportunity Mapping](#)
- [Displacement Risk Mapping](#)
- [VISION 2050 Alternatives Background Paper](#) (provides information on transit investments, capacity and other factors)

County-developed Buildable Lands reports also provide valuable information about development capacity, trends, and past targets to assist this work.

PSRC staff are available to provide additional data support and technical assistance as needed.



# APPENDIX A: BEST PRACTICE METHODOLOGY FOR HOUSING TARGETS



## APPENDIX B: GROWTH TARGET STATUTORY AND POLICY REFERENCES

*This appendix compiles relevant growth target statutes, rules, policy, and guidance from the Growth Management Act, Washington Administrative Code, and VISION 2050. Statutory language is provided as of February 2021 — please see links provided for the most current adopted language.*

### Revised Code of Washington — Population Projections

#### **RCW 43.62.035 Determining population—Projections**

The office of financial management shall determine the population of each county of the state annually as of April 1st of each year and on or before July 1st of each year shall file a certificate with the secretary of state showing its determination of the population for each county. The office of financial management also shall determine the percentage increase in population for each county over the preceding ten-year period, as of April 1st, and shall file a certificate with the secretary of state by July 1st showing its determination. At least once every five years or upon the availability of decennial census data, whichever is later, the office of financial management shall prepare twenty-year growth management planning population projections required by RCW [36.70A.110](#) for each county that adopts a comprehensive plan under RCW [36.70A.040](#) and shall review these projections with such counties and the cities in those counties before final adoption. The county and its cities may provide to the office such information as they deem relevant to the office's projection, and the office shall consider and comment on such information before adoption. Each projection shall be expressed as a reasonable range developed within the standard state high and low projection. The middle range shall represent the office's estimate of the most likely population projection for the county. If any city or county believes that a projection will not accurately reflect actual population growth in a county, it may petition the office to revise the projection accordingly. The office shall complete the first set of ranges for every county by December 31, 1995.

A comprehensive plan adopted or amended before December 31, 1995, shall not be considered to be in noncompliance with the twenty-year growth management planning population projection if the projection used in the comprehensive plan is in compliance with the range later adopted under this section.

### Revised Code of Washington — Urban Growth Areas and Growth Forecasts

[...] (2) Based upon the growth management population projection made for the county by the office of financial management, the county and each city within the county shall include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county or city for the succeeding twenty-year period, except for those urban growth areas contained totally within a national historical reserve. As part of this planning process, each city within the county must include areas sufficient to accommodate the broad range of needs and uses that will accompany the projected urban growth including, as appropriate, medical, governmental, institutional, commercial, service, retail, and other nonresidential uses. [...]

### Washington Administrative Code – Urban Growth Areas and Growth Forecasts

#### **WAC 365-196-310 — [Urban growth areas](#)**

[...] (4) Recommendations for meeting requirements.

- (a) Selecting and allocating county-wide growth forecasts. This process should involve at least the following:
  - (i) The total county-wide population is the sum of the population allocated to each city; the population allocated to any portion of the urban growth area associated with cities; the population allocated to any portion of the urban growth area not associated with a city; and the population growth that is expected outside of the urban growth area.

- (ii) RCW 43.62.035 directs the office of financial management to provide a reasonable range of high, medium and low twenty-year population forecasts for each county in the state, with the medium forecast being most likely. Counties and cities must plan for a total county-wide population that falls within the office of financial management range.
  
- (iii) Consideration of other population forecast data, trends, and implications. In selecting population forecasts, counties and cities may consider the following:
  - (A) Population forecasts from outside agencies, such as regional or metropolitan planning agencies, and service providers.
  - (B) Historical growth trends and factors which would cause those trends to change in the future.
  - (C) General implications, including:
    - (I) Public facilities and service implications. Counties and cities should carefully consider how to finance the necessary facilities and should establish a phasing plan to ensure that development occurs at urban densities; occurs in a contiguous and orderly manner; and is linked with provision of adequate public facilities. These considerations are particularly important when considering forecasts closer to the high end of the range. Jurisdictions considering a population forecast closer to the low end of the range should closely monitor development and population growth trends to ensure actual growth does not begin to exceed the planned capacity.
    - (II) Overall land supplies. Counties and cities facing immediate physical or other land supply limitations may consider these limitations in selecting a forecast. Counties and cities that identify potential longer term land supply limitations should consider the extent to which current forecast options would require increased densities or slower growth in the future.
    - (III) Implications of short term updates. The act requires that twenty-year growth forecasts and designated urban growth areas be updated at a minimum during the periodic review of comprehensive plans and development regulations (WAC 365-196-610). Counties and cities should consider the likely timing of future updates, and the opportunities this provides for adjustments.
  - (D) Counties and cities are not required to adopt forecasts for annual growth rates within the twenty-year period, but may choose to for planning purposes. If used, annual growth projections may assume a consistent rate throughout the planning period, or may assume faster or slower than average growth in certain periods, as long as they result in total growth consistent with the twenty-year forecasts selected.
  - (iv) Selection of a county-wide employment forecast. Counties, in consultation with cities, should adopt a twenty-year county-wide employment forecast to be allocated among urban growth areas, cities, and the rural area. The following should be considered in this process:
    - (A) The county-wide population forecast, and the resulting ratio of forecast jobs to persons. This ratio should be compared to past levels locally and other regions, and to desired policy objectives; and
    - (B) Economic trends and forecasts produced by outside agencies or private sources. [...]

## Revised Code of Washington – Review and Evaluation Program

### RCW 36.70A.215 – [Review and evaluation program](#)

*The Growth Management Act Review and Evaluation Program (Buildable Lands) provides for a process to evaluate and address whether growth targets are being achieved. Provisions related to growth targets are provided below – please see the statute for additional context and requirements.*

[...] (a) Determine whether a county and its cities are achieving urban densities within urban growth areas by comparing growth and development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the countywide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual growth and development that has occurred in the county and its cities; and

(b) Identify reasonable measures, other than adjusting urban growth areas, that will be taken to comply with the requirements of this chapter. Reasonable measures are those actions necessary to reduce the differences between growth and development assumptions and targets contained in the countywide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans with actual development patterns. The reasonable measures process in subsection (3) of this section shall be used as part of the next comprehensive plan update to reconcile inconsistencies.

[...]

(d) Develop reasonable measures to use in reducing the differences between growth and development assumptions and targets contained in the countywide planning policies and county and city comprehensive plans, with the actual development patterns. The reasonable measures shall be adopted, if necessary, into the countywide planning policies and the county or city comprehensive plans and development regulations during the next scheduled update of the plans.

[...]

(c) Provide an analysis of county and/or city development assumptions, targets, and objectives contained in the countywide planning policies and the county and city comprehensive plans when growth targets and assumptions are not being achieved. It is not appropriate to make a finding that assumed growth contained in the countywide planning policies and the county or city comprehensive plan will occur at the end of the current comprehensive planning twenty-year planning cycle without rationale; [...]

### VISION 2050 – Multicounty Planning Policies, Actions, and Guidance

*The Regional Growth Strategy chapter in VISION 2050 details purpose, regional geographies, growth allocations, policies and guidance on targets. Please see VISION 2050 for the complete adopted language.*

**Regional Growth Strategy Goal:** The region accommodates growth in urban areas, focused in designated centers and near transit stations, to create healthy, equitable, vibrant communities well-served by infrastructure and services. Rural and resource lands continue to be vital parts of the region that retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities over the long term.

## Guidance for Aligning Growth Targets

Prior to the next cycle of local comprehensive plan updates, counties and cities will work together to establish growth targets for each jurisdiction to accommodate projected growth. These targets set by countywide planning bodies support implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy and VISION 2050 objectives of housing production, better jobs-housing balance, and greater growth near the region's transit investments. This section provides guidance on regional review of growth target allocations in countywide planning policies and comprehensive plan certification.

- PSRC, in consultation with its members, will update its guidance and Plan Review Manual and provide technical assistance to counties and cities as they develop countywide growth targets and prepare comprehensive plan updates. Guidance will address housing, regional centers, goals for transit-oriented development, support for jobs-housing balance, and other aspects of VISION 2050. PSRC's guidance will recognize that different approaches may be appropriate based on local circumstances. PSRC will provide early information and outreach to local governments on plan review and certification, including land use growth assumptions in comprehensive plans.
- PSRC will review countywide adoption of growth targets with recognition of good faith efforts to be consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and VISION 2050 over the long-term. Targets should demonstrate how cities and counties are working towards the outcomes and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy. In some cases, countywide growth targets may not fully align with the precise shares in the Regional Growth Strategy. For example, there are jurisdictions where high-capacity transit is planned to be built and operational late in the planning period, and higher growth rates may not occur until the last decades of this plan.
- As local comprehensive plans are updated, land use growth assumptions used in plans should be consistent with adopted countywide growth targets and support implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy. Capacity is the amount of housing and jobs that could be allowed under adopted zoning. The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities, at a minimum, to provide capacity to accommodate 20-year projected growth targets. Capacity may be greater than land use growth assumptions used in comprehensive plans.
- In its review of comprehensive plans for certification, PSRC looks for substantial consistency of the plan's land use growth assumptions with adopted countywide growth targets. In addition to assessing that the land use growth assumptions are consistent with the growth targets and implementing the Regional Growth Strategy, PSRC review and certification looks broadly at all actions and measures taken in local comprehensive plans to implement VISION 2050 and achieve the regional growth shares. In developing comprehensive plan updates, jurisdictions will be asked to explain how the plan supports VISION 2050 and works to meet the Regional Growth Strategy over the long term.
- If adjustments to countywide growth targets are needed, they should be coordinated through the countywide process. Countywide planning groups should work to develop processes to reconcile any discrepancies between the countywide growth targets and land use growth assumptions in local comprehensive plans. Reconciliation processes should maintain consistency with the Regional Growth Strategy.

## **Regional Growth Strategy Adjustments to Support Targets**

Cities and unincorporated areas are grouped into their respective regional geographies based on designated regional centers, planning for annexation and incorporation, and existing and planned high-capacity transit. PSRC recognizes that some of these qualities may change based on future planning. To reflect these changes, PSRC's Executive Board may make a technical amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy to potentially reclassify cities and unincorporated areas. Technical amendments are limited to those updates needed to support establishing Growth Management Act population and employment targets; other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

## **Regional Growth Strategy Policies**

**MPP-RGS-1** Implement the Regional Growth Strategy through regional policies and programs, countywide planning policies and growth targets, local plans, and development regulations.

**MPP-RGS-2** Use consistent countywide targeting processes for allocating population and employment growth consistent with the regional vision, including establishing: (a) local employment targets, (b) local housing targets based on population projections, and (c) local growth targets for each designated regional growth center and manufacturing/industrial center.

**MPP-RGS-3** Provide flexibility in establishing and modifying growth targets within countywide planning policies, provided growth targets support the Regional Growth Strategy.

**MPP-RGS-4** Accommodate the region's growth first and foremost in the urban growth area. Ensure that development in rural areas is consistent with the regional vision and the goals of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

**MPP-RGS-5** Ensure long-term stability and sustainability of the urban growth area consistent with the regional vision.

**MPP-RGS-6** Encourage efficient use of urban land by optimizing the development potential of existing urban lands and increasing density in the urban growth area in locations consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

**MPP-RGS-7** Provide additional housing capacity in Metropolitan Cities in response to rapid employment growth, particularly through increased zoning for middle density housing. Metropolitan Cities must review housing needs and existing density in response to evidence of high displacement risk and/or rapid increase in employment.

**MPP-RGS-8** Attract 65% of the region's residential growth and 75% of the region's employment growth to the regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas to realize the multiple public benefits of compact growth around high-capacity transit investments. As jurisdictions plan for growth targets, focus development near high-capacity transit to achieve the regional goal.

**MPP-RGS-9** Focus a significant share of population and employment growth in designated regional growth centers.

**MPP-RGS-10** Focus a significant share of employment growth in designated regional manufacturing/industrial centers.

**MPP-RGS-11** Encourage growth in designated countywide centers.

**MPP-RGS-12** Avoid increasing development capacity inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy in regional geographies not served by high-capacity transit.

**MPP-RGS-13** Plan for commercial, retail, and community services that serve rural residents to locate in neighboring cities and existing activity areas to avoid the conversion of rural land into commercial uses.

**MPP-RGS-14** Manage and reduce rural growth rates over time, consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, to maintain rural landscapes and lifestyles and protect resource lands and the environment.

**MPP-RGS-15** Support the establishment of regional funding sources to acquire conservation easements in rural areas.

**MPP-RGS-16** Identify strategies, incentives, and approaches to facilitate the annexation or incorporation of unincorporated areas within urban growth areas into cities.

## **Regional Growth Strategy Actions**

### **Regional Actions**

**RGS-Action-1 Urban Growth Area:** PSRC will report on urban growth area changes, annexation activity, and countywide coordination practices in each county.

**RGS-Action-2 Track and Evaluate Growth:** PSRC will study, track, and evaluate growth and development occurring in the central Puget Sound region and in high-capacity transit station areas in terms of meeting the goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Strategy.

**RGS-Action-3 Growth Targets:** PSRC, together with its member jurisdictions, will provide guidance and participate with countywide processes that set or modify local housing and employment targets. This effort will include consideration of the timing of Regional Growth Strategy implementation in relation to anticipated completion of regional transit investments and corresponding market responses. PSRC will also provide guidance on growth targets for designated regional centers and improving jobs-housing balance, and coordinate with member jurisdictions regarding buildable lands reporting.

**RGS-Action-4 Rural Growth:** PSRC, together with its members and stakeholders, will explore and implement, as feasible, opportunities for local, regional and state-wide conservation programs to reduce development pressure in rural and resource areas to conserve valuable open space areas:

- Establishing a regional structure for Transfer and Purchase of Development Rights and open space markets.
- Publishing a toolkit of open space conservation and other rural protection strategies.
- Working to facilitate city and urban development consistent with VISION 2050 that reduces rural development pressure.

**RGS-Action-5 Regional Conservation Fund:** PSRC, in collaboration with its members and other partners, will explore and support the establishment of regional funding sources to acquire conservation easements in rural areas.

**RGS-Action-6 Outreach:** PSRC will work with members to address ways the region can help communities understand and support increased growth within the urban growth area. VISION 2050's success is dependent on cities and counties welcoming new growth.

### **Local Actions**

**RGS-Action-7 Regional Growth Strategy:** As counties and cities update their comprehensive plans in 2024 to accommodate growth targets and implement the Regional Growth Strategy, support the implementation of a full range of strategies, including zoning and development standards, incentives, infrastructure investments, housing tools, and economic development, to achieve a development pattern that aligns with VISION 2050 and to reduce rural growth rates over time and focus growth in cities.

**RGS-Action-8 Plan for Jobs-Housing Balance:** Countywide planning groups will consider data on jobs-housing balance, especially recent and projected employment growth within Metropolitan and Core cities, to set housing growth targets that substantially improve jobs-housing balance consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Metropolitan and Core cities experiencing high job growth will take measures to provide additional housing capacity for a range of housing types and affordability levels to meet the needs of those workers as well as the needs of existing residents who may be at risk of displacement.

**RGS-Action-9 Growth Targets:** Countywide planning groups will work to develop processes to reconcile any discrepancies between city and county adopted targets contained in local comprehensive plans.