

Implementation

The collective work of PSRC, counties, cities, and other agencies and organizations is needed to guide the region toward its desired future. PSRC's implementation of VISION 2050 occurs through five primary work programs described in this section:

- Data, tools, and planning guidance
- Policy and plan review
- Regional transportation planning and funding
- Regional economic development planning
- Other regional actions

This chapter also describes how VISION 2050 may be amended periodically to reflect technical or significant changes and provides the legal framework for VISION 2050.

Data, Tools, and Local Assistance

PSRC provides data, analysis, guidance, and technical support to its members. Members participate in a wide variety of workshops and other education and training opportunities to learn about important issues for local jurisdictions, such as establishing growth targets, implementing housing affordability strategies, countywide planning policies, comprehensive plans, center plans, and transit station area plans. Technical assistance is also identified in VISION 2050 actions.

PSRC provides regional and small area forecasts, as well as data and tools for demographic, transportation, housing, land use, environmental, and other research. PSRC staff are available to support local work with data and analysis. The most popular maps and data sets are available on PSRC's website, and members may make custom requests. PSRC also conducts land use, transportation, and mobile source emissions modeling.

Policy and Plan Review

Regional review of local, countywide, and transit agency plans provides the opportunity for coordination and collaboration and helps in understanding how individual plans are working collectively to support the region's objectives.

PSRC's process for the review of countywide, local, and transit agency plans is established by the consistency requirements of the Growth Management Act, as well as state-required guidelines for evaluating comprehensive plans and directives in PSRC's Interlocal Agreement. State law requires regional "guidelines and principles" for regional transportation planning (RCW 47.80.026). The multicounty planning policies in VISION 2050 serve as the region's guidelines and principles. They must address factors such as: concentration of economic activity, residential density, development and urban design that supports high-capacity transit, joint- and mixed-use development, freight movement and port access, development patterns that promote walking and biking, transportation demand management, effective and efficient transportation, access to regional systems, and intermodal connections. Additional information on the legal framework is provided on PSRC's website.



Certification of plans is a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding or proceed with projects submitted into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program. Review of local, countywide and transit agency plans is described below and in more detail in PSRC’s Plan Review Manual.

Countywide Planning Policies

Countywide planning policies provide a county-level framework for guiding local planning. Countywide planning policies are adopted by each county and its cities through countywide planning councils and local ratification processes. PSRC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization, must certify the countywide planning policies for consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan and regional guidelines and principles (RCW 47.80). The Regional Collaboration chapter calls for countywide planning policies to be updated to reflect revised multicounty planning policies by December 31, 2021.

The countywide planning policies generally contain local growth targets that implement the Regional Growth Strategy. By allocating county and regional growth to groups of regional geographies, the Regional Growth Strategy preserves flexibility for counties to work with their cities as they develop specific, jurisdiction-level growth targets that take into account local conditions, such as development capacity and phased opening of high-capacity transit. PSRC provides data and technical assistance to countywide planning organizations to assist in the development of growth targets that are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

PSRC provides early consultation, data and technical assistance, and early review of draft countywide planning policies prior to adoption. Once adopted, PSRC reviews countywide planning policies for certification.



Bellevue Youth Council



Local Comprehensive Plans

Every county, city, and town in the region maintains a comprehensive plan to shape the future of their community. PSRC works with local governments and agencies to ensure that planning is coordinated and meets regional and state requirements consistent with PSRC's adopted [Policy and Plan Review Process](#). PSRC reviews and certifies the transportation-related provisions of local comprehensive plans based on three things:

1. Established regional guidelines and principles
2. The adopted long-range Regional Transportation Plan
3. Transportation planning requirements in the Growth Management Act

PSRC's [Plan Review Manual](#) provides details on the plan review and certification process, including guidance and checklists for aligning plans and policies with VISION 2050 and Growth Management Act requirements.

Local comprehensive plans were reviewed under VISION 2040 provisions for the first time in 2014-2016. Strengths and challenges from that review were assessed and documented in a report called [Taking Stock 2016](#). Based on feedback from the Taking Stock assessment, PSRC will update the plan review process and Plan Review Manual to make review of future local plan updates more clear, predictable, and efficient. Earlier communication on expectations for updates and reviews will be key and improving the process for board review of plans will help to make it more predictable.

As jurisdictions develop their comprehensive plan updates, PSRC provides review and feedback in three phases: pre-update consultation, early review of draft plan elements, and review of adopted plans for certification. PSRC will coordinate with countywide groups and hold workshops on the plan review process. Pre-update consultation between jurisdictions and PSRC will help identify new provisions in VISION 2050 and the Growth Management Act. Consistent with the updated Plan Review Manual, the local plan certification checklist will provide clarity on expectations for plan certification.

Subarea Plans for Regional Centers

Jurisdictions that have regionally designated centers – either regional growth centers or regional manufacturing/industrial centers – are required by PSRC to prepare a subarea plan for each center. Subarea plans should satisfy the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.080) and regional requirements for subarea plans. Regional requirements are documented in the [Regional Centers Framework](#), [Designation Procedures for New Centers](#), and [regional center plans checklist](#).

For new regional centers, PSRC's designation procedures require that the jurisdiction adopt a subarea plan prior to designation. The process to certify a subarea plan is similar to the process for certifying comprehensive plans.

Transit Agency Long-Range Plans and Transit Development Plans

To coordinate transit planning with local and regional growth management planning efforts, transit agency long-range plans should demonstrate consistency with the [Regional Transportation Plan](#), be compatible with multicounty planning policies and the countywide planning policies for the county or counties in which the agency provides service, and facilitate coordination with local governments within the agency's service area.



Transit agencies are expected to update their long-range plans on a regular basis to provide necessary revisions to the Regional Transportation Plan's future integrated transit network and to assist in identifying new assumptions for capital needs associated with the future integrated transit network and access to the transit system.

Sound Transit's Regional Transit System Plan

Washington state law requires PSRC to formally certify that the regional transit system plan prepared by the Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) is consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan (RCW 81.104). Updates to the regional transit system plan must also address RCW 81.112.350, which directs Sound Transit to implement the regional transit-oriented development strategy developed by PSRC.

Regional Transportation Planning and Project Funding

The [Regional Transportation Plan](#), the region's federally required metropolitan transportation plan, is the functional plan implementing VISION 2050 transportation provisions. The Regional Transportation Plan describes how the region intends to provide transportation choices to support expected growth and identifies investments the region is making to improve transit, highway, rail, ferry, bicycle, and pedestrian systems to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. A state and federally required air quality conformity analysis is conducted on the plan, as well as a broader emissions analysis that includes greenhouse gas emissions. Federal transportation planning regulations require metropolitan transportation plans to be updated every four years. The next update of PSRC's Regional Transportation Plan is scheduled for adoption in 2022. It will use the land use and growth assumptions described in in VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy.

The Regional Transportation Plan includes a list of regionally significant transportation projects that implement VISION 2050. To be considered for funding, projects must be in or consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan and included in the [Regional Transportation Improvement Program](#), which is a four-year snapshot of current transportation projects underway in the region. These projects are funded with federal, state, and local funds, including the most recent federal grants awarded through PSRC.

In addition to the list of projects, the Regional Transportation Improvement Program also contains the following information:

- The adopted policy framework for the distribution of PSRC's federal funds, which is based on the multicounty planning policies.
- A description of the project selection process for these funds.
- A discussion of the interagency coordination and the public review process.
- The findings of the air quality conformity analysis.

Each project in the Transportation Improvement Program undergoes a comprehensive review by PSRC staff to ensure it meets certain requirements.



Regional Economic Development Planning

The [Regional Economic Strategy](#) implements the economic development provisions in VISION 2050. It describes the region's approach to sustained economic vitality and global competitiveness. The Central Puget Sound Economic Development District Board develops the Regional Economic Strategy and identifies actions to implement it. These actions focus on building regional capacity, identifying emerging opportunities, providing data analysis, and collaborating on events that bring together regional economic development interests. Funding for implementation efforts come from a variety of sources such as federal and state grants, local funding, and support from regional partners. The U.S. Economic Development Administration requires the Regional Economic Strategy to be updated every five years.

Other Regional Actions

In addition to PSRC's regular technical assistance, plan review, and transportation and economic development planning programs, VISION 2050 identifies other actions designed to implement the multicounty planning policies and the Regional Growth Strategy. Many of the actions are identified as work items for PSRC; other actions are more appropriate for countywide or subregional groups, counties, cities, or other partners. Some of the regional actions VISION 2050 identifies include:

- **Regional equity strategy:** Develop a regional equity strategy to make racial and social equity central to PSRC's work and support local comprehensive plan updates.
- **Regional housing strategy:** Develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy to support local comprehensive plan updates and provide the framework for regional housing assistance, including a regional housing needs assessment, best practices to promote and address housing affordability issues, and coordination with other housing efforts.
- **Four-Part Greenhouse Gas Strategy:** Advance the implementation of the region's Greenhouse Gas Strategy to meaningfully reduce emissions throughout the region from transportation, land use, and development.
- **Open space planning:** Implement conservation, restoration, stewardship, and other recommendations in the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan.

PSRC policy boards and the Executive Board will prioritize VISION 2050 actions in upcoming work programs and budget cycles. PSRC will identify performance measures and regularly monitor them after VISION 2050 is adopted. The plan also identifies actions for PSRC to communicate with the state Legislature on important regional implementation steps for VISION 2050.





Amendments to VISION 2050

VISION 2050, including the Regional Growth Strategy and the multicounty planning policies, may be amended periodically. Technical amendments approved by PSRC's Executive Board may include changes to the regional geography classification of a city or unincorporated community due to designation of new regional growth centers and annexation or incorporation of an unincorporated urban area. Technical amendments are limited to those updates needed to support setting Growth Management Act population and employment targets; other amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy are subject to approval by the General Assembly.

Major amendments or updates to VISION 2050 are anticipated to be completed about every 10 years to incorporate up-to-date information, such as changing demographics documented by the U.S. decennial census, and to support local comprehensive plan updates, countywide growth targets, or the Regional Transportation Plan with updated growth assumptions. Periodic major updates may also be appropriate to recognize and adapt to significant changes, such as following a five-year review and designation period for regional centers. Amendments to VISION 2050, outside of the limited technical amendments listed above, require an action of PSRC's General Assembly, which meets annually.



VISION 2050 Legal Framework

VISION 2050 was developed under the authority and mandates of federal and state statutes and regional agreements.

Growth Management Act

Washington's Growth Management Act provides the framework for planning at all levels in the state, including identifying and protecting critical environmental areas, developing multicounty and countywide planning policies, and crafting local comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A). Multicounty planning policies (and the related countywide planning policies) provide a common framework for local and regional planning in the central Puget Sound region. At a minimum, multicounty planning policies are to address the urban growth area, contiguous and orderly development, siting capital facilities, transportation, housing, joint planning, and economic development. The multicounty planning policies are included in VISION 2050.

Additional guidance is provided by the portion of state law that authorizes and directs the planning efforts and responsibilities of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RCW 47.80). PSRC is designated as the Regional Transportation Planning Organization for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. This legislation related to the Growth Management Act calls for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to develop and carry out a program to certify the transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans. It mandates the development of regional guidelines and principles to guide both regional and local transportation planning. These guidelines and principles are to address, at a minimum, the following factors: concentration of economic activity, residential density, urban design that supports high-capacity transit, freight transportation and port access, development patterns that promote pedestrian and nonmotorized transportation, circulation systems, transportation demand management, joint and mixed-use developments, railroad right-of-way corridors, and intermodal connections. Multicounty planning policies serve as PSRC's regional guidelines and principles under RCW 47.80.

PSRC's certification of transportation-related provisions in local comprehensive plans includes determining conformity with state requirements for transportation planning in local plans, consistency with adopted regional guidelines and principles, and consistency with the Regional Transportation Plan (RCW 36.70A.070 and 47.80.026). The legislation also addresses the certification of the countywide planning policies. Certification of plans is a requirement for jurisdictions and agencies that intend to apply for PSRC funding or proceed with projects submitted into the Regional Transportation Improvement Program.

Interlocal Agreement

In 1992, PSRC and its member jurisdictions, including counties, cities, federally recognized tribes, state agencies, ports, and associate members, adopted an interlocal agreement that provides PSRC with the authority to carry out the functions required under state and federal law. With regard to long-range planning, the interlocal agreement calls for PSRC to "maintain VISION as the adopted regional growth management strategy."



Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act

In 2015, Congress enacted the latest authorization for the nationwide transportation program, titled the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. This legislation includes requirements for planning by Metropolitan Planning Organizations, including maintaining financially constrained long-range transportation plans for their regions. PSRC is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Federal requirements and planning factors include supporting the economic vitality of the region, increasing safety and security, improving mobility and accessibility for people and freight, protecting the environment, coordinating transportation and land use, integrating and connecting the transportation system across all modes, emphasizing the preservation of the system as well as promoting efficient management and operations, improving resilience and reliability, and enhancing travel and tourism. These planning factors have been incorporated into VISION 2050's Regional Growth Strategy and multicounty planning policies, which in turn guide the development of the region's functional regional transportation plan.

Public Works and Economic Development Act

The federal Public Works and Economic Development Act (1965), amended as the Public Works and Economic Development Act in 1998, supports long-term economic development in areas experiencing substantial economic distress through the creation, expansion, or retention of permanent jobs that help raise income levels. Economic development funding programs support these goals with financial backing for economic projects that support the construction or rehabilitation of essential public infrastructure and the development of facilities that are necessary to generate private investments. To be eligible for these programs, the region must develop a comprehensive economic development strategy to guide its economic development efforts. To satisfy this requirement, PSRC and the Economic Development District have developed Amazing Place, the region's economic strategy, which serves as the economic functional plan of VISION 2050.

Clean Air Acts

VISION 2050 and its multicounty planning policies were developed in conformity with the guidelines and requirements of the federal Clean Air Act and state Clean Air Act, and their related amendments. These complementary pieces of legislation define a framework for maintaining air quality and human and environmental health through planning, project implementation, and regulation. Under federal and state regulations, PSRC is required to demonstrate that the long-range Regional Transportation Plan and the region's Transportation Improvement Program – which are guided by VISION 2050 – conform to the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality. This conformity requirement is a mechanism for ensuring that transportation activities – plans, programs, and projects – are reviewed and evaluated for their impacts on air quality prior to funding or approval.

Analysis of Fiscal Impact

The Growth Management Act requires that countywide and multicounty planning policies address an analysis of fiscal impact. The Central Puget Sound Hearings Board concluded in *City of Snoqualmie v. King County* (1993), that "the purpose of the fiscal impact analysis is to realistically assess the fiscal costs and constraints of implementing countywide planning policies and thereby to contribute to the design of an effective strategy to overcome those constraints." The Hearings Board stated that "this task was imposed on cities and counties because they are the units of government directly responsible for creating and implementing the countywide planning policies, as well as the parties most directly affected fiscally by implementation of the countywide planning policies." Within the central Puget Sound region, analysis of fiscal impact is deferred to the respective countywide planning policies for King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties.

