

# Multicounty Planning Policies

Multicounty planning policies provide a regional framework for addressing land use, economic development, transportation, public services, and environmental planning and serve three key roles: implement the Regional Growth Strategy, create a common planning framework for local plans, and provide the policy structure for other regional plans.

## Regional Growth Strategy Implementation and Mitigation

The multicounty planning policies call for concentrating growth within the region's designated urban growth area and limiting development in natural resource and rural areas. The policies address land use, housing, urban growth area designations, target setting for population and employment, and focusing development in centers. Multicounty planning policies also serve as mitigation to offset potential negative impacts that result from growth in the region.

## A Common Planning Framework

Under the Growth Management Act, multicounty planning policies have both practical and substantive effects on city and county comprehensive plans and provide a mechanism for achieving consistency among cities and counties on regional planning matters. They also guide a number of regional processes, including PSRC's local plan and policy review, the evaluation of transportation projects seeking regionally managed funds, and the development of criteria for PSRC programs and projects. These and other processes are described in more detail in the Implementation chapter.

### *The Growth Management Act and Multicounty Planning Policies*

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The Growth Management Act requires the adoption of multicounty planning policies (MPPs) for the central Puget Sound region (RCW 36.70A.210 (7)). The Growth Management Hearings Board, which is responsible for hearing and determining compliance under the Growth Management Act, has stated that “the MPPs provide for coordination and consistency among the metropolitan counties sharing common borders and related regional issues as required by RCW 36.70A.100, and, in order to ensure consistency, the directive policies of the MPPs need to have a binding effect.” (Summit-Waller Community Association, et al, v Pierce County)

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Countywide planning policies complement multicounty policies and provide a more specific level of detail to guide county and local comprehensive planning in each of the four counties. Both multicounty and countywide planning policies address selected issues in a consistent manner, while leaving other issues to local discretion.

## Regional Planning Project Guidance

Multicounty planning policies serve as the framework for growth management, economic development, and transportation projects carried out by PSRC and others. Both the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) and [Amazing Place](#), the regional economic strategy, are guided by the multicounty planning policies in VISION 2050.

## VISION 2050 Policy Structure

The multicounty planning policies are presented in a three-part framework with a goal, policies, and actions.

Figure 3 – Regional Planning Framework



### Goals

Goals speak to the desired outcomes for each of the topics covered in VISION 2050 and set the tone for the integrated approach and common framework for the regional policies. Each policy chapter begins with a goal that provides the context for the policies and actions that follow.

### Policies

The multicounty planning policies provide overall guidance and direction for planning processes and decision-making at regional and local levels. Given the strong integration across the various policy sections in VISION 2050, the full body of multicounty policies is to be considered in decision-making for various programs, projects, and planning processes. The multicounty policies also serve as planning guidelines and principles required by state law to provide a common framework for regional and local planning, particularly in the area of transportation planning and its relationship to land use (RCW 47.80.026).

### Actions

Actions implement the policies and outline responsibilities and tasks for PSRC, local governments, and other partners. Regional-level actions are primarily the responsibility of PSRC. Local-level actions are intended for implementation by counties, cities, and towns. Recognizing the different capacity of various municipalities to work on plan-related provisions, PSRC will make efforts to assist counties, cities, and towns in addressing these actions.

