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.

VISION 2050 is a shared strategy for how and where the central Puget Sound region can grow to a forecast of 5.8 million people and 3.4 million jobs by the year 2050. The Regional Growth Strategy considers how the region can distribute the forecasted growth, primarily within the designated urban growth area, and support development near high-capacity transit in the region. The strategy is a description of a preferred pattern of urban growth that has been designed to minimize environmental impacts, support economic prosperity, advance social equity, promote affordable housing choices, improve mobility, and make efficient use of new and existing infrastructure.

VISION 2050 envisions a future where the region:

- Maintains stable urban growth areas.
- Focuses the great majority of new population and employment within urban growth areas.
- Maintains a variety of community types, densities, and sizes.
- Achieves a better balance of jobs and housing across the region.
- Within urban growth areas, focuses growth in cities.
- Within cities, creates and supports centers to serve as concentrations of jobs, housing, services, and other activities.
- Builds transit-oriented development around existing and planned infrastructure.
- Uses existing infrastructure and new investments efficiently.

Under the Growth Management Act, counties, in consultation with cities, are responsible for adopting population and employment growth targets to ensure that each county collectively is accommodating projected population and employment. These population and employment growth targets are a key input to local comprehensive plans. Jurisdictions use growth targets to inform planning for land use, transportation, and capital facilities. The Regional Growth Strategy provides a regional framework for the countywide growth target process by defining expectations for different types of places.

**A Framework for Growth**

The Growth Management Act identifies three distinct landscapes: urban lands, rural lands, and natural resource lands. The Act makes clear that the long-term sustainability of rural and resource lands is dependent on accommodating development within the designated urban growth area. The designation of the urban growth area also helps channel investments in infrastructure within already built-up areas—especially cities.
How and where growth happens within the urban growth area has differing impacts on regional mobility, environmental outcomes, and community development. In response to the central challenge of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, VISION 2050 builds on the state Growth Management Act framework and the regional emphasis of focusing growth into centers and near high-capacity transit options to create more sustainable communities and reduce emissions. Compared to past trends, the strategy encourages more population and employment growth in the largest and most transit-served communities in the region. Environmental review for VISION 2050 showed that, compared with a range of alternatives, this growth pattern would have significant benefits for mobility, air quality, environmental stewardship, and healthy communities.

The region’s varied rural areas offer a diverse set of natural amenities. Common features include small-scale farms, wooded areas, lakes and streams, and open spaces. Technically, rural lands are those areas that are not designated for urban growth, agriculture, forest, or mineral resources. Rural development can consist of a variety of uses and residential patterns that preserve rural character. The strategy encourages lower rates of growth in rural areas and in outlying communities to preserve rural landscapes and reduce long car trips.

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

Both Major Military Installations and Tribal Lands are recognized in the Regional Growth Strategy because of their unique importance to the region. However, neither type of place is allocated forecasted growth in the strategy because both plan outside of the Growth Management Act. Military installations are governed by the federal government and tribal lands are sovereign Native American nations.

Urban Growth Area

Counties must work with their cities to designate an urban growth area as the primary location for growth and future development. All four counties in the region designated an urban growth area in the mid-1990s. Subsequently, only relatively minor adjustments to the urban growth area have been made. The Regional Growth Strategy was developed with the assumption that, with good planning and efficient land use, existing urban growth area designations can accommodate the population and employment growth expected by 2050. VISION 2050 calls for a stable and sustainable urban growth area into the future, thus any adjustments to the urban growth area in the coming decades should continue to be minor. When adjustments to the urban growth area are considered, it will be important to avoid encroaching on important habitat and natural resource areas. The Growth Management Act, countywide planning policies, and county comprehensive plans include requirements and procedures to amend the urban growth area.
Focusing Growth Near Transit and in Centers

Regional Centers

The emphasis on the development of centers throughout the region is at the heart of VISION 2050’s approach to growth management. Regional growth centers are locations characterized by compact, pedestrian-oriented development, with a mix of office, commercial, civic, entertainment, and residential uses. Regional growth centers are envisioned as major focal points of higher-density population and employment, served with efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure and services. The Regional Centers Framework establishes two types of regional growth centers—metro growth centers and urban growth centers—and sets criteria and growth expectations for them. Metro growth centers are the densest and most connected places in the region and are expected to accommodate higher levels of growth.

Mixed-use centers of different sizes and scales—including large designated regional growth centers, countywide centers, local downtowns, and other local centers—are envisioned for all of the region’s cities. Concentrating growth in mixed-use centers of different scales allows cities and other urban service providers to maximize the use of existing infrastructure, make more efficient and less costly investments in new infrastructure, and minimize the environmental impacts of urban growth.

The region also contains manufacturing/industrial centers. These are existing employment areas with intensive, concentrated manufacturing and industrial land uses that cannot be easily mixed with other activities. Manufacturing/industrial centers are intended to continue to accommodate a significant amount of regional employment. The Regional Centers Framework establishes two types of regional manufacturing/industrial centers—industrial employment centers and industrial growth centers—and establishes different criteria and growth expectations for these centers. Unlike regional growth centers, these areas are not appropriate for residential growth.
Access to High-Capacity Transit

The central Puget Sound region is investing heavily in its high-capacity transit system, greatly expanding light rail, bus rapid transit, and passenger ferry service. Since the initial Regional Growth Strategy in VISION 2040 was adopted, the region’s voters approved two major Sound Transit ballot measures, and other transit agencies have significantly expanded planning for high-capacity transit. VISION 2050 incorporates a renewed focus on locating growth near current and future high-capacity transit facilities. Rail, ferry, and bus rapid transit station areas are ideal for increased density, new residences, and businesses—referred to as transit-oriented development. Allowing for greater employment and population growth within walking distance to high-capacity transit promotes the use of the region’s transit systems and reduces the number of trips that require a personal vehicle. VISION 2050 includes a goal for 65% of the region’s population growth and 75% of the region’s employment growth to be located in regional growth centers and within walking distance of high-capacity transit.

Housing, Displacement, and Jobs-Housing Balance

Planning for a balanced distribution of affordable housing choices and jobs is critical to the success of the Regional Growth Strategy. Skyrocketing housing prices have displaced residents, particularly in major cities and near job centers. The displacement risk mapping discussed in the Development Patterns section identifies areas most at risk of economic and physical displacement. VISION 2050 calls for jurisdictions to understand and to mitigate displacement for both people and businesses to the extent feasible. Collectively, cities and counties must provide for a wider variety of housing types and densities to ensure the region can accommodate new growth while minimizing displacement of existing residents.

Uneven economic prosperity has also contributed to long commutes and the need for auto trips to retail and services. The Regional Growth Strategy encourages shifting expected employment growth from King County to Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Jobs-housing balance compares the relative amount of housing and employment in an area, with an aim toward reducing long commute trips. Across the region, the strategy generally plans for improved jobs-housing balance compared to today. Access to good paying jobs outside of King County is important for regional mobility, environmental outcomes, and community development.

Distributing Growth Using Regional Geographies

The Regional Growth Strategy is a cornerstone of VISION 2050, providing specific numeric shares to achieve a development pattern with fewer environmental impacts and a more compact urban form. VISION 2050 provides a framework for the distribution of growth to regional geographies. Geographies are defined by the idea that different types of cities and unincorporated areas will play distinct roles in the region’s future based on regional centers, access to high-capacity transit, and future planning.

High-capacity transit includes existing or planned light rail, commuter rail, ferry, streetcar, and bus rapid transit.

Cities, towns, and neighborhoods of various sizes and character will continue to offer a wide choice of living options. The region’s centers framework fits within the regional geographies framework, with centers of different sizes and scales envisioned for all cities.
In the Regional Growth Strategy, the region’s landscape has been divided into nine types of geographies based on their size, function, and access to high-capacity transit:

- **Metropolitan Cities** (5 cities) and **Core Cities** (16 cities, including unincorporated Silverdale) include cities that have designated regional growth centers. Most are also connected to the region’s high-capacity transit system. These two groups of cities are and will be the most intensely urban places in the region.

- **High Capacity Transit Communities** (32 cities and unincorporated communities) are cities and unincorporated areas that are connected to regional high-capacity transit system. These urban unincorporated areas are also planned for annexation or incorporation.

- **Cities and Towns** (42 cities) 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 but are not yet planned for annexation or incorporation and/or high-capacity transit.

- **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.

- **Major Military Installations** serve as hubs for both military and civilian employment and population.

- **Tribal Lands** are sovereign lands that serve as home to the region’s native peoples and culture.

These regional geographies provide a flexible framework to distribute the region’s forecast growth to groups of places and allow for greater specificity than simply relying on county boundaries. (However, in some instances, an individual jurisdiction may stand alone within a regional geography category.) This framework provides clearer regional expectations about the roles of different types of cities and unincorporated areas in accommodating regional growth.

**The Regional Growth Strategy by the Numbers**

The Regional Growth Strategy is comprised of two parts. First is a growth concept that builds on the foundation provided in the Growth Management Act, emphasizing the role of the urban growth area, regional growth centers, and areas with access to high-capacity transit in accommodating future population and employment. The second part—the numeric growth allocations by regional geographies—contains specific shares to distribute forecast growth. The regional geographies framework calls for focusing growth into different categories of cities and urban unincorporated areas and recognizes the roles of the region’s counties in accommodating population and employment growth.

The Regional Growth Strategy is intended to coordinate growth among the region’s cities and towns as they periodically update local housing and employment growth targets and amend their local comprehensive plans. Countywide growth targets are based on population forecasts developed by the state Office of Financial Management and regional employment forecasts from PSRC.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for different regional geographies to accommodate different shares of population and employment growth—within the region as a whole, as well as within each county. While relative amounts may differ somewhat between counties, the roles of regional geographies within each county are consistent for the region as a whole. Within each county, the relative distribution of growth to individual cities and unincorporated places will be determined through countywide target-setting, taking into account local circumstances.
The primary emphasis of the Regional Growth Strategy is on the shares of growth among regional geographies. The Regional Growth Strategy was developed using the PSRC macroeconomic forecasts for the year 2050 and Office of Financial Management assumptions about the relative shares of growth to each county. These numbers will change marginally in future rounds of regional forecasts, so, when looking at the numbers in the tables that follow, the percentages of regional and county growth may be more useful for local planning than the specific numbers contained in the forecasts.
Figure 5 – Regional Geographies
Figure 6 – Population Growth 2017-50, Draft Preferred Alternative

![Population Growth Chart]

Table: Additional Population Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Metropolitan Cities</th>
<th>Core Cities</th>
<th>High-Capacity Transit Communities</th>
<th>Cities &amp; Towns</th>
<th>Urban Unincorporated</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>20% - 87,000</td>
<td>11% - 47,000</td>
<td>50% - 210,000</td>
<td>9% - 37,000</td>
<td>4% - 18,000</td>
<td>6% - 25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>37% - 134,000</td>
<td>23% - 85,000</td>
<td>10% - 31,000</td>
<td>7% - 25,000</td>
<td>11% - 41,000</td>
<td>3% - 11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>34% - 33,000</td>
<td>16% - 15,000</td>
<td>36% - 34,000</td>
<td>0% - 0</td>
<td>6% - 6,000</td>
<td>8% - 6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>44% - 381,000</td>
<td>40% - 346,000</td>
<td>11% - 92,000</td>
<td>5% - 44,000</td>
<td>0% - 4,000</td>
<td>1% - 6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>38% - 635,000</td>
<td>28% - 493,000</td>
<td>21% - 371,000</td>
<td>6% - 195,000</td>
<td>4% - 69,000</td>
<td>3% - 50,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Growth from 2017-50. Ranges provided for Pierce County - additional countywide discussion needed to finalize allocations.

Figure 7 – Employment Growth 2017-50, Draft Preferred Alternative

![Employment Growth Chart]

Table: Additional Employment Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Metropolitan Cities</th>
<th>Core Cities</th>
<th>High-Capacity Transit Communities</th>
<th>Cities &amp; Towns</th>
<th>Urban Unincorporated</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>39% - 89,000</td>
<td>17% - 39,000</td>
<td>30% - 68,000</td>
<td>8% - 18,000</td>
<td>3% - 7,000</td>
<td>2% - 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>48% - 94,000</td>
<td>23% - 44,000</td>
<td>13% - 26,000</td>
<td>6% - 13,000</td>
<td>8% - 15,000</td>
<td>2% - 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitsap</td>
<td>35% - 20,000</td>
<td>26% - 15,000</td>
<td>32% - 18,000</td>
<td>0% - 0</td>
<td>2% - 1,000</td>
<td>5% - 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King</td>
<td>46% - 311,000</td>
<td>45% - 310,000</td>
<td>5% - 40,000</td>
<td>3% - 18,000</td>
<td>0% - 1,000</td>
<td>0% - 3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>44% - 514,000</td>
<td>35% - 408,000</td>
<td>13% - 152,000</td>
<td>4% - 49,000</td>
<td>2% - 24,000</td>
<td>1% - 13,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Metropolitan Cities**

Each of the four counties in the region contains at least one central city that has convenient access to high-capacity transit and serves as a civic, cultural, and economic hub. At least one regional growth center has been designated within each of these Metropolitan Cities to serve as a focal point for accommodating both population and employment growth.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the five Metropolitan Cities to accommodate at least 36% of regional population growth and 44% of regional employment growth by the year 2050. 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. Within Metropolitan Cities, jurisdictions should encourage growth near high-capacity transit and within regional growth centers to achieve regional growth goals.

Figure 8 – Metropolitan Cities

**Metropolitan Cities (5 cities, 230 square miles): Bellevue, Bremerton & Bremerton Urban Growth Area (UGA), Everett, Seattle, and Tacoma**

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

The region contains other major cities called Core Cities with designated regional growth centers intended to accommodate a significant share of future growth. These 16 cities (including the unincorporated community of Silverdale) contain key hubs for the region’s long-range multimodal transportation system and are major civic, cultural, and employment centers within their counties. The Regional Growth Strategy envisions a major role for these cities in accommodating growth while providing a significant share of the region’s housing.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the 16 Core Cities to accommodate 28-29% of the region’s population growth and 35% of its employment growth by the year 2050. Within Core Cities, jurisdictions should encourage growth near high-capacity transit stations and within regional growth centers to achieve regional growth goals.

Figure 9 – Core Cities

Core Cities (16 cities including Silverdale, 255 square miles): Auburn, Bothell, Burien, Federal Way, Issaquah, Kent, Kirkland, Lakewood, Lynnwood, Puyallup, Redmond, Renton, SeaTac, Silverdale, Tukwila, and University Place

King County’s Core Cities are expected to accommodate a much larger share of King County’s growth than Core Cities in Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties.
High Capacity Transit Communities

High Capacity Transit Communities include cities connected to existing or planned light rail, commuter rail, ferry, streetcar, and bus rapid transit facilities. High Capacity Transit Communities also includes urban unincorporated areas planned for annexation or incorporation and with existing or planned access to high-capacity transit. As the region’s transit system grows, these 32 communities play an increasingly important role as hubs for employment and population growth. Targeting growth within these transit-rich communities helps to support mobility and reduces the number and length of vehicle trips.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the 32 High Capacity Transit Communities to accommodate 21% of the region’s population growth and 13% of its employment growth by the year 2050.

Figure 10 – High Capacity Transit Communities

High Capacity Transit Communities (32 total, 246 square miles): Arlington, Bainbridge Island, Bothell Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA), Des Moines, DuPont, Edmonds, Edmonds MUGA, Everett MUGA, Federal Way Potential Annexation Area (PAA), Fife, Fircrest, Kenmore, Kingston, Lake Forest Park, Larch Way Overlap, Lynnwood MUGA, Marysville, Mercer Island, Mill Creek, Mill Creek MUGA, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Mukilteo MUGA, Newcastle, North Highline (Seattle PAA), Renton PAA, Port Orchard & Port Orchard UGA, Poulsbo & Poulsbo UGA, Shoreline, Sumner, Tacoma PAA, and Woodinville

High Capacity Transit Communities in Kitsap and Snohomish counties are expected to accommodate a much larger share of their county growth than High Capacity Transit Communities in King and Pierce counties.
Cities and Towns

Cities and Towns include a diverse array of jurisdictions, including places near major cities, small residential towns, and free-standing cities and towns surrounded by rural and resource lands. Cities and Towns provide important housing, jobs, commerce, and services in their downtowns and local centers. The region’s 42 Cities and Towns are expected to accommodate relatively less growth than historical trends and remain relatively stable for the long term. Many Cities and Towns are served by local transit options, but these jurisdictions are not connected to the regional high-capacity transit system. Some may not be served by scheduled fixed-route transit or be within a transit service district. Their locally-designated city or town centers provide local job, service, cultural, and housing areas for their communities. These local centers should be identified in local comprehensive plans and become priority areas for future investments and growth at the local level.

Cities inside the contiguous urban growth area will likely receive a larger share of growth due to their proximity to the region’s large cities, existing and planned transportation systems, and other supporting infrastructure. Small residential towns have limited potential for accommodating growth and are likely to receive a lesser share of cities and towns growth.

Free-standing cities and towns are separated from the contiguous urban growth area and should serve as hubs for relatively higher-density housing choices and as job and service centers for surrounding rural areas. These cities should be the focal points of rural-based industries and commerce and the location of schools and other institutions serving rural populations. Due to their physical isolation from the rest of the designated urban growth area, they will likely receive a lesser overall share of growth and are not expected to grow as much as cities and towns in the contiguous urban growth area.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for 42 Cities and Towns to accommodate 6% of the region’s population growth and 4% of its employment growth by the year 2050.
Cities and Towns (42 cities, 140 square miles): Algona, Beaux Arts, Black Diamond, Bonney Lake, Brier, Buckley, Carbonado, Carnation, Clyde Hill, Covington, Darrington, Duvall, Eatonville, Edgewood, Enumclaw, Gig Harbor, Gold Bar, Granite Falls, Hunts Point, Index, Lake Stevens, Maple Valley, Medina, Milton, Monroe, Normandy Park, North Bend, Orting, Pacific, Roy, Ruston, Sammamish, Skykomish, Snohomish, Snoqualmie, South Prairie, Stanwood, Steilacoom, Sultan, Wilkeson, Woodway, and Yarrow Point

Cities and Towns are located throughout the region and represent over half of the region’s incorporated jurisdictions. Cities and Towns in Snohomish and Pierce counties are expected to accommodate a relatively higher share of their countywide growth compared to King and Kitsap counties.
Urban Unincorporated Areas

Urban Unincorporated Areas are areas within the urban growth area and governed by the county. Urban Unincorporated Areas are quite diverse, with both lightly developed outlying areas and neighborhoods that are much more urban and indistinguishable from surrounding incorporated jurisdictions. Urban Unincorporated Areas 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. Urban unincorporated areas that are planned for annexation and served by high-capacity transit are categorized in the High Capacity Transit Communities regional geography.

County buildable lands analyses suggest that urban unincorporated areas have the potential to accommodate significant growth for the long term, and that there will be little need to expand the designated urban growth area or development capacity. The process for adjusting the urban growth area is provided in the Growth Management Act.

VISION 2050 envisions that over time the 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. Planning and permitting that is well-coordinated between the counties and adjacent cities will be key to managing the growth of these areas.

The Regional Growth Strategy calls for the Unincorporated Urban Growth Area to accommodate 4-5% of the region’s population growth and 2% of the employment growth by the year 2050.

Figure 12 – Urban Unincorporated Areas

Urban Unincorporated Areas (134 square miles) All four counties have designated urban unincorporated areas, many of which are affiliated for annexation with incorporated cities and towns. The unincorporated urban growth areas in Pierce and Kitsap counties have the highest share of anticipated county population and employment growth, followed by King and Snohomish counties.
Rural Areas and Natural Resource Lands

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

Rural Areas

Rural Areas are expected to retain important cultural, economic, and rural lifestyle opportunities in the region over the long term. They are not intended to be served with urban services or accommodate a significant amount of residential or employment growth. 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.

Figure 13 – Rural Areas

Rural Areas (1,494 square miles): All four counties have designated rural areas, which represents 24% of the region’s land area.
Natural Resource Lands

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

Figure 14 – Natural Resource Lands

Natural Resource Lands (3,829 square miles): Natural resource lands, representing 61% of the region’s land area.
Other Planning Areas

While local governments plan under the Growth Management Act and establish countywide growth targets, there are other areas in the region that are not subject to the state and regional planning framework. Military installations are home to enlisted personnel and civilian jobs but are subject to federal planning requirements. Tribal lands are managed by sovereign tribal nations and are home to many people and jobs. These areas plan differently than local governments, but VISION 2050 recognizes their important roles in the region and their influence on regional growth patterns.

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. Military employment greatly benefits the region’s economy and generates billions of dollars in economic impact.

Military bases vary greatly in size, population density and character and often integrate industrial uses, commercial and service uses, and residential development. Installations are not required to plan under the Growth Management Act, and the Regional Growth Strategy does not allocate forecasted regional growth to these areas. However, installations serve as hubs for both employment and population, and it is important to work together on growth planning in and around bases.

Major Military Installations are defined by PSRC as installations with more than 5,000 enlisted and service personnel. This regional geography is designed to promote coordination between the military installation, countywide planning efforts, and neighboring jurisdictions to plan for growth, address regional impacts and enhance multimodal transportation options. Per the Regional Centers Framework, regional expectations for Major Military Installations include:

- Ongoing coordination between the military installation, countywide planning forum, and neighboring jurisdictions regarding planned growth, regional impacts, and implementation of multimodal transportation options.
- Support for multimodal commute planning and mode split goals for the installation.
- Completed Joint Land Use Study or similar coordinated planning effort.
Major Military Installations (4 installations, 122 square miles): Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, and Naval Station Everett

There are five smaller installations in the region: Naval Base Kitsap Keyport, Seattle Coast Guard Station, Naval Base Kitsap Jackson Park, Camp Murray, and Naval Base Everett – Smokey Point Support Complex.
**Tribal Lands**

The central Puget Sound region is home to nine sovereign nations recognized by the United States government: the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Port Gamble S’klallam Tribe, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the Sauk-Suiattle Tribe, the Snoqualmie Tribe, the Stillaguamish Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, the Tulalip Tribes, and the Nisqually Tribe.

PSRC acknowledges the importance of the Coast Salish peoples and lands to the region. Tribal lands have immense value as the home of the region’s native cultures and traditions. Some tribal lands have also emerged as significant concentrations of jobs, schools, cultural centers, and other activities. Quil Ceda Village, for example, is one of only two federal municipalities in the country, and the Tulalip Tribes is one of the largest employers in Snohomish County.

Characteristics of tribal lands vary widely across the region. Tribal lands can include very large areas, with population and employment activity varying from dispersed to dense. While some are rural or forested, others have concentrated residential and employment uses. Tribal land use can be complex, as tribal governments own land outside of reservations, and some reservation land is under fee-simple private ownership and covered under other regional geographies.

As sovereign nations, each tribe has its own 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. Tribes engage in comprehensive planning similar to other jurisdictions with regular updates addressing elements such as land use, transportation, housing, and utilities. Many tribes have adopted a “seven generation” concept of planning to evaluate whether decisions will benefit generations far into the future. Tribes help to shape regional policy by participating as members of PSRC.
Tribal Lands (9 reservations, 93 square miles): Muckleshoot Indian Reservation, Nisqually Indian Reservation, Port Gamble Indian Reservation, Port Madison Reservation (Suquamish Tribe), Puyallup Indian Reservation, Sauk-Suiattle Indian Reservation, Snoqualmie Indian Reservation, Stillaguamish Indian Reservation, Tulalip Indian Reservation
Guidance for Aligning Growth Targets

Counties and cities 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. Counties and their cities will define new countywide growth targets prior to the next cycle of local comprehensive plan updates. This section addresses principles to guide regional review of countywide growth target allocations and comprehensive plan certification.

- PSRC will provide updated guidance and 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 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.

- Comprehensive plans for cities and counties are expected to include their adopted countywide growth targets. The Growth Management Act requires counties and cities to, at a minimum, accommodate 20-year projected growth targets.

- PSRC review and certification of local plans is based on actions and measures to implement VISION 2050 and work towards the Regional Growth Strategy, and not simply on whether local planning assumptions match targets. 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.

- In its review of comprehensive plans for certification, PSRC reviews consistency of the plan with adopted countywide growth targets. As VISION 2050 is implemented, PSRC will update the Plan Review Manual to provide additional guidance on planning for growth targets prior to comprehensive plan updates.

- If adjustments to countywide growth targets are needed, they should be coordinated through the countywide process.

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, and local plans.

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 countywide growth targets, 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.

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
Attract 65% of the region’s residential and 75% of the region’s employment growth to 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-8
Focus a significant share of population and employment growth in designated regional growth centers.

MPP-RGS-9
Focus a significant share of employment growth in designated regional manufacturing/industrial centers.
MPP-RGS-10

Encourage growth in designated countywide centers.

MPP-RGS-11

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

MPP-RGS-12

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-13

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.

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. 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.
Local Action

RGS-Action-4

**Regional Growth Strategy:** As counties and cities update their comprehensive plans in 2023/24 to accommodate growth targets and implement the Regional Growth Strategy, support 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.