How should VISION 2050 address housing and housing affordability?

Volatility in the housing market since VISION 2040 was adopted in 2008 underscores many of the challenges ahead. From the precipitous drop in housing prices and foreclosures of the Great Recession to the current economic upswing and job growth that have led to historic increases in rents and home prices, the region’s housing market has experienced great highs and lows that have benefited some and created and exacerbated hardship and inequalities for others.

The VISION 2050 planning process is an opportunity to raise awareness of regional housing issues and to identify coordinated strategies, policies, and actions to ensure that the region’s housing needs are met.

On July 5, the growth board discussed how the region should plan for current and future housing needs in VISION 2050. A presentation with data highlights and information on current housing policies kicked off the board’s discussion.

The board’s discussion focused on problem statements addressing long-term housing supply, promoting affordable housing in all development, and investing in communities to maintain affordability. Board members suggested that PSRC serve as an information clearinghouse on housing, and provide model ordinances and technical assistance to help communities plan for housing needs.

The board expressed interest in strongly promoting or requiring affordable housing units as part of all new housing, especially in communities near high capacity transit. Members also suggested that all communities have a role in planning for affordable housing.

Based on the discussion, PSRC staff will work with staff committees to further assess and develop options for how VISION 2050 can better address housing needs in the region. Staff will draft initial changes to the housing chapter, which will be brought back to the board at a future meeting.

For more information, contact Paul Inghram at 206-464-7549 or PInghram@psrc.org.

Regional Open Space Conservation Plan

Staff briefed the board on the newly published Regional Open Space Conservation Plan, which maps the open space network in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties and identifies priority actions needed to sustain open spaces for the long term.
The plan identifies approximately 463,000 acres of the regional open space network that are most at risk. The plan provides a platform for working together on efforts to meet the region’s most pressing conservation priorities.

Board members and others are encouraged to share the plan with colleagues and other partners in open space roles, including planning, parks and recreation, transportation, hazard mitigation, and natural resources.

For more information, contact Erika Harris at 206-464-6360 or EHarris@psrc.org.

Plan certifications for Eatonville and University Place

The growth board recommended certification of the major comprehensive plan update for Eatonville. The plan was found consistent with the multicounty planning polices and the regional transportation plan, and to conform to Growth Management Act requirements.

The board also recommended full certification of University Place’s Regional Growth Center Subarea Plan.

For more information, contact Laura Benjamin at 206-464-7134 or LBenjamin@psrc.org, or Liz Underwood-Bultmann at 206-464-6174 or LUnderwood-Bultmann@psrc.org.