Dear Chair Mello, Vice Chair Margeson, and members of the Growth Management Policy Board,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on VISION 2050. We are a group of organizations working towards a sustainable, healthy, and equitable Puget Sound region. We acknowledge the influential role that the Puget Sound Regional Council and the long-range growth plan play in shaping the vision for this region, and we strongly support the Board's decision to hold today's extended session on social equity.

This topic recognizes that despite overall economic prosperity, growing transportation systems, and quality of life, the region's prosperity, opportunity, and environmental benefits are not distributed equally to all its residents. Historic and systemic racism and economic injustice have meant that life expectancy, rates of disease, commute times, access to parks and more across the region varies widely by zip code, by level of income, as well as by race. VISION 2050 has the potential to help remedy existing and future disparities, but, if done without centering racial and social equity, it could also exacerbate them.

Social equity was raised as a top concern in the scoping period, both by Board members and by members of the public. At a recent peer networking event, electeds, agency staff, and advocates from all four counties worked side-by-side in an at-capacity workshop to imagine how regional planning could better address issues of social and racial equity. For us, that discussion reinforced both the challenge implementing equitable growth policies and the necessity of doing this work.

As you consider today how to ensure that VISION 2050 helps deliver equitable outcomes in transportation, health, access to opportunity, and the environment, we urge you to consider the following:

- **Call out race specifically.** Racial inequities across all indicators for success are deep and pervasive. Strategies that target these inequities often result in systemic improvements that benefit members of all racial groups, but the initial focus must be – explicitly – on those most impacted.

- **Center equity in all policies.** Consider not just equity-specific policies, but also the potential impacts on various demographics of different policies. (For example, VISION policies encourage home ownership, but do not consider directly how to remove institutional barriers to home ownership for families of color and low wealth families). This, of course, will be an ongoing process as we update each chapter of VISION.
Focus on accountability and implementation. As you refine policies, consider what success looks like and how you will get there. Are we considering mitigation strategies early in planning and prioritizing them for implementation?

- We recommend adopting specific performance targets for equity policies (e.g. end disparities in air pollution exposure) and VISION action items to ensure you have a path to success, including developing a plan for incorporating equity goal accountability into comprehensive plan certification and transportation investment frameworks, and a feedback mechanism to evaluate progress.

- Improve engagement. Equity is about both outcomes and process. Achieving the equity outcomes we hope to see in the region will take both time and expertise from the frontline communities that have been most impacted. Therefore, we recommend an action item to identify resources to develop an environmental justice committee with resourced equity experts and community representatives to guide planning at PSRC.

Sincerely,

Transportation Choices Coalition
Housing Development Consortium
Futurewise
Sierra Club Washington State Chapter
350 Seattle
Climate Solutions
Puget Sound Sage
The Wilderness Society