



Draft VISION 2050 Plan

Public Outreach and Comment Summary

October 2019

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Introduction

VISION 2050 is the long-range plan for the central Puget Sound region and builds on PSRC’s VISION 2040 plan to keep the region healthy and vibrant as it grows. The Growth Management Policy Board began work on VISION 2050 in 2017. An integral part of updating the long-range plan is hearing from the region’s cities and counties, tribes, ports, military installations, residents, business owners, and other agencies and organizations. PSRC has engaged the public throughout the plan update, with increased efforts at key milestones in the planning process.

VISION 2050 Engagement Timeline



Most recently, the Growth Management Policy Board has been updating the draft goals, policies, and actions and Regional Growth Strategy for VISION 2050. This work culminated in a July 11 board action to direct staff to prepare the draft VISION 2050 plan. On July 19, 2019, the draft plan was released for a 60-day public comment period. This report summarizes the outreach efforts for the draft plan and comments received. All comments submitted on the draft plan are available on the [VISION 2050 webpage](#) and organized by commenter type ([Agencies, Organizations, and Businesses](#), [Cities and Counties](#), [Individuals](#), and [Tribal Nations](#)).

Goals for Engaging the Public

When conducting outreach for VISION 2050, PSRC used the following goals to guide engagement efforts:

- Provide a variety of ways for people to engage with PSRC and provide comments
- Use innovative outreach techniques
- Equitably engage a range of diverse communities
- Leverage and strengthen relationships with cities, counties, and other partners throughout the region to reach more people
- Increase the overall awareness of PSRC and VISION 2050

Releasing the Draft Plan

The draft VISION 2050 plan reflects months of policy discussions by the Growth Management Policy Board and PSRC advisory committees and incorporates feedback received throughout the planning process. The document is comprised of an introduction, multicounty planning policies for nine functional areas, and an implementation section. Online resources include a glossary and reference materials and supporting documents. The draft plan is available at www.psrc.org/vision.

On July 19, the draft plan was released for a 60-day public comment. Figure 1 summarizes the variety and reach of initial notice activities completed, consistent with PSRC's [Public Participation Plan](#). PSRC also sent letters with copies of the draft plan to all nine federally recognized tribes in the region to encourage their participation in the planning process.

Figure 1: Draft Plan Notices



Connecting with Residents, PSRC Members and Others

PSRC organized several different engagement activities and opportunities for people to share their thoughts on the draft plan. Comments could be submitted through an online comment portal, in-person at events and a public hearing, or by sending an email, mail, or fax directly to PSRC.

Workshops and Open Houses

PSRC held back-to-back in-person events at five different locations around the region to provide information and engage with people. The first half of each workshop featured a brief presentation and small-group discussions focused on policy areas. The workshops were geared towards jurisdictional and agency staff, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders and provided time for a deeper dive into the subject matter. Oriented towards members of the public, drop-in style open houses were held in the evening

Workshop & Open House Locations, 2019

Everett | Snohomish County | July 29
Tacoma | Pierce County | August 7
Bellevue | King County | August 12
Seattle | King County | August 13
Port Orchard | Kitsap County | August 15

following the workshops. A brief presentation about VISION 2050 was given, and attendees could browse stations organized by policy area. PSRC staff was available to talk to people and answer questions throughout both events. **Nearly 200 people attended** these events, and paper comment forms were completed by some attendees.

Tabling at local events

An important objective of this outreach period was to meet people in their communities and take advantage of summer events. PSRC maximized the timing of the public comment period and tabled at four community events:

- Pierce County Fair in Graham, WA on August 9
- Burien's B-Town Fiesta on August 25
- Evergreen State Fair in Monroe, WA on August 27
- Bremerton Farmers Market on September 12

PSRC staff **talked to hundreds of residents** and shared information about PSRC's mission and the draft plan, including how to view and comment on the draft plan.



Online Open House

PSRC developed an online open house that mirrored the in-person open houses to reach residents and PSRC members who were not able to attend in-person events. The online open house was available for the entire 60-day public comment period and available for translation into nine different languages (Vietnamese, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, German, French, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic). The online open house and VISION 2050 webpages had **over 9,000 page views** over the course of the public comment period. The draft plan was **downloaded nearly 3,000 times**.

Growth Management Public Hearing

The Growth Management Policy Board held a special public hearing on September 5, 2019 to hear comments on the draft plan. **Thirteen people addressed the board**.

Ongoing Engagement Efforts

Throughout the public comment period, PSRC staff attended meetings of cities, countywide and regional forums and provided presentations by request about the draft plan:

- 4Culture - Local Arts Agencies Network
- City of Burien
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)
- Environmental Resources Agencies Coordination
- Four-County Health Districts (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish)
- Island Regional Transportation Planning Organization (IRTPO)
- King County Planning Directors
- King County Interjurisdictional Team (IJT)
- Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council
- Laborers Local 242
- Regional Project Evaluation Committee (RPEC)
- Salmon Safe
- Snohomish County Special Needs Transportation Committee (SNOTRAC)
- Snohomish County Tomorrow
- Sound Cities Association Public Issues Committee (PIC)
- Transportation Choices Coalition Community Partners
- City of Tukwila
- Washington Association of Land Trusts

Getting the Word Out

Organizing engagement events are only effective if people know about them. PSRC worked diligently to get the word out about the different ways people could view and comment on the plan.

Outreach Toolkit

PSRC developed a new resource for the 60-day public comment period – an Outreach Toolkit – to make it easy for jurisdictions and partner agencies to share information about VISION 2050 with their networks. The toolkit included:

- A short recorded webinar, available on YouTube, that could be played at community meetings
- An annotated presentation for staff to give to boards and councils
- Short blurbs that could be inserted into newsletters, social media posts or email blasts
- Links to social media content and blog posts
- Links to promotional materials and fact sheets for quick reference

The toolkit leveraged the expansive networks of our partners and made it easier for local staff to share information about VISION 2050 with their communities. Jurisdictions and organizations used the outreach toolkit, which helped raise awareness and generate more feedback on the plan. The recorded webinar was **viewed nearly 200 times**.

Maximizing Social Media and Internet Ads

PSRC is active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These platforms were used to keep the public comment period on the forefront over the 60-day timeframe. PSRC boosted posts and paid for Facebook and Google ads to increase visibility. PSRC identified areas with higher percentages of people of color and/or people with low incomes. These communities have been historically underrepresented in regional planning processes and PSRC targeted ads to these areas to increase engagement and awareness of regional planning. By the end of the public comment period, **over 300,000 people were reached** with Google ads alone.

Additional Communication Tools

PSRC considers accessibility in all work. To ensure visually impaired residents could access the draft plan, PSRC made all materials accessible for e-readers.

To reach non-English speaking residents, PSRC translated a postcard-style handout into nine different languages (Vietnamese, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, German, French, Spanish, Russian, and Arabic) and distributed them to about **50 community-**

based organizations around the region. These cards encouraged residents to visit the online open house and engage in the process.

During the public comment period, PSRC published a series of VISION 2050 posts on the agency's blog highlighting key policy areas and topics from the draft plan. These blog posts were shared on PSRC's social media accounts and generated likes, shares and retweets.

Tracking coverage in traditional local media such as newspapers and news sites revealed that PSRC or VISION 2050 was **mentioned 150 times** between January and September 2019. VISION 2050 was specifically mentioned 39 times, largely in regional publications. PSRC board members also wrote opinion editorials promoting the importance of regional planning. Editorials were published in the *Daily Herald* (Everett), *Kitsap Sun*, *Puget Sound Business Journal*, *The Seattle Times*, and *The News Tribune* (Tacoma). This coverage increased awareness of the public comment period.

Engagement Results: A Summary of Comments

PSRC heard from 619 commenters and received about 1,600 unique comment communications.

■ Individuals ■ Tribal Nations ■ Cities and Towns ■ Agencies and Organizations



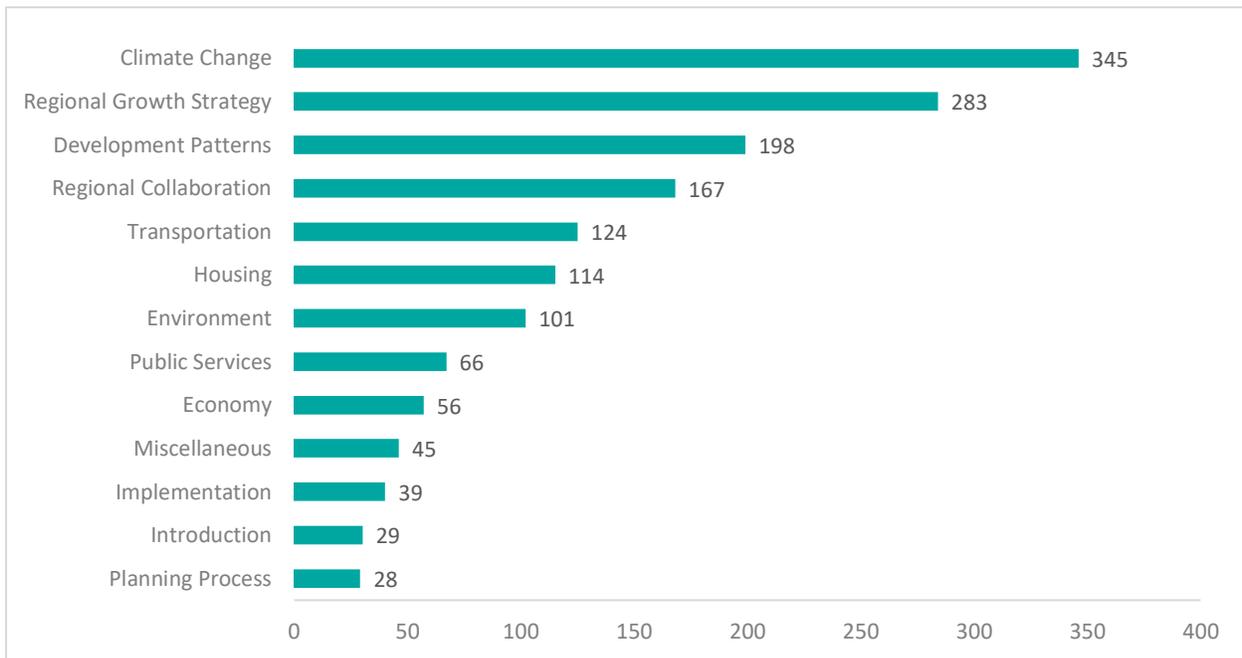
Comments were submitted in a variety of ways, from handwritten comments submitted at events to online comment form submittals. Comment submissions were split into individual comments and categorized by the primary policy topic addressed. Some comments recommended specific edits to plan text or goals, policies, or actions. Other comments suggested clarifications, additions and deletions throughout the draft plan or provided general sentiments about regional planning issues. All comments are sorted by major changes, minor changes, and comments that don't require specific amendments to VISION 2050.

Comment Themes

The highest number of comments were on the topic of climate change. Commenters supported the addition of the new Climate Change chapter but thought more work could be done to strengthen climate policies and actions. Likewise, several comments supported the inclusion of equity throughout all policies. Commenters expressed strong support for the Regional Growth Strategy's emphasis on transit-oriented development, with commenters emphasizing the need for growth in urban areas and centers to protect rural and outlying areas. Commenters also strongly support compact development patterns, reduction in environmental impacts, and increased access to transit. Concern over higher displacement risk was also present in many comments, with many emphasizing the need for equitable development as growth occurs. Underlying many comments was a concern about housing affordability and the need to provide more affordable housing options as the region grows. Cities and counties were concerned about the implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy and called for clarification of its role in the local target setting process.

Comments by Category

The chart below shows the number of comments made by planning topic.



The table below summarizes key comment themes by topic. All comments submitted are available through the [VISION 2050 webpage](#) and organized by commenter type.

| Topic and Summary | # of Comments |
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|-------------------|---------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Climate Change | 345 |
|-----------------------|------------|

The region should be more ambitious in addressing climate change. The region should set bold targets in accordance with the state of the science. Equity and climate justice should be used as a lens in mitigating impacts. PSRC should provide technical assistance and guidance to local jurisdictions. Climate should be addressed in comprehensive plans and in PSRC’s transportation planning. Regular monitoring of progress should occur. Aviation emissions should be addressed.

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|---------------------------------|------------|
| Regional Growth Strategy | 283 |
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Many comments expressed support for the draft Regional Growth Strategy and the focus on transit-oriented development. Rural growth and growth in cities further from major job centers presents challenges for environmental outcomes and regional mobility. Cities should have opportunities to plan for growth they are expecting. The plan should be clearer about implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy through policies and guidance on the local target setting process. The plan review manual and future guidance from PSRC should be revised to be clear about Regional Growth

| Topic and Summary | # of Comments |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
|--------------------------|----------------------|

Strategy implementation. Jobs-housing balance is an important consideration for many and should be clearly described in the plan. Inclusion of tribes and military installations in the Regional Growth Strategy is important.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Development Patterns | 198 |
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Compact development patterns in centers and high-capacity transit station areas is important and should be promoted. As development occurs, concurrency with local and state facilities should be evaluated. Limiting incompatible uses around manufacturing/industrial centers and military installations is vital to supporting these economic assets. Updating the region’s Industrial Lands Analysis is necessary to address changing trends in industrial and manufacturing industries. Focusing growth in urbanized areas will save rural and natural resources. Support for maintaining stable urban growth areas and limiting expansions. Inclusion and promotion of open space, parks, and trails are critical as development occurs. Equitable development with meaningful community engagement is important as the region grows. Annexation and incorporation of urban areas is important and must be done in coordination with service providers. Rural growth should be managed, and tools, such as Transfer of Development Rights programs, are supported.

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| Regional Collaboration | 167 |
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Support for the inclusion of equity and Regional Equity Strategy action, noting that it should address engagement, equity impact tools, and data monitoring. Implementation of regional goals and local planning priorities will require new funding sources for local government services. The board should consider funding priorities for certain areas and communities. It is difficult to distinguish between high-level regional policies and policies that need to be considered as local plans are updated. Recognition and collaboration with the region’s tribes is important. Clarification on the relationship with military installations is helpful and welcomed. The plan should highlight regional coordination between ports and other special districts and service providers.

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| Transportation | 124 |
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The region needs to assess transportation needs to accommodate additional growth anticipated through 2050. With the transit-focused nature of the regional growth strategy, improvements to public transportation and ensuring those improvements are in place in a timely fashion are important. In addition, safe access to transit and other destinations via many different modes, including walking, bicycling, other forms of transit, and automobile are important. The region should develop a safe and efficient

Topic and Summary**# of Comments**

transportation system that accounts for changes in technology and that helps address the challenges associated with climate change. This applies not just to the movement of people, but to the movement of freight and goods. It is also important to incorporate air travel needs into the region's multimodal transportation system analysis.

Housing**114**

The region needs to expand its housing stock to include a greater diversity of housing types affordable to a wider range of incomes. New housing should be focused in livable communities with access to jobs, services, and amenities. Greater attention is needed on jobs-housing balance to ensure job-rich communities are providing adequate housing for workers. Support for the strengthened draft policy language, specifically the emphasis on affordable housing near transit and the public intervention needed to provide housing affordable to low and very-low income households. PSRC needs to provide data and technical assistance, including a Regional Housing Strategy, to support local jurisdictions to better address housing affordability.

Increased housing costs and the resulting displacement often have a domino effect across the region. Development and increased access to transit, jobs, and services can result in increased housing prices and force long-time residents from their homes and communities. Additional work is needed to address unintended and inequitable consequences of growth and to help residents stay in their communities.

Environment**101**

General concern for the environment and support of the draft policies and actions to protect and enhance tree canopy, habitat, air quality, water quality, farmland, and forests. The implementation of the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan should be accelerated. Support policies and actions that encourage environmental stewardship and green stormwater infrastructure (low-impact development). Concern regarding water resources and planning for stormwater and water supply, conservation, hydrology, and quality, particularly in the face of climate change. More aggressive action to reduce greenhouse gases and increase resilience is desired. Improving wastewater treatment is desired to improve water quality. Concern regarding air pollution and noise from aircraft and vehicles. Concern over the need for policies that might already be addressed by environmental regulations. Regional resilience and hazard mitigation planning was suggested. Incorporation of equity and performance measures into environmental work is desired, and some support for reviewing local plans with an equity lens.

| Topic and Summary | # of Comments |
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| Public Services | 66 |
| <p>PSRC should help coordinate and facilitate better consolidation and integration of services from multiple service providers. Reducing waste and providing public services in greener, more sustainable ways is important. Flexibility in school siting policies is desired from school districts that include both urban and rural areas. Considering impacts to public services when developments are reviewed and approved is critical. Focusing growth in centers and urban areas minimizes infrastructure and service costs, while also mitigating environmental impacts. Emergency management should be addressed in addition to the existing public services.</p> | |
| Economy | 56 |
| <p>The region needs a skilled, trained workforce and apprenticeship programs are valuable for this purpose. Transportation funding criteria should consider projects that include strong labor standards that include apprenticeships and community workforce agreements. Living-wage job opportunities should be available in all four counties. Ensuring economic development opportunities for smaller cities is an important component of the region’s economic strategy. Jobs need to be located closer to where workers live to help improve the region’s job-housing balance.</p> | |
| Miscellaneous | 45 |
| <p>Support for the draft plan and for other commenter’s comments. Agencies and jurisdictions collaborated on their comment letters. Document needs a more accessible glossary and updated document elements.</p> | |
| Implementation | 39 |
| <p>Implementation is important in accomplishing the region’s vision for the future, and equity and climate change are urgent issues. Identifying metrics to track progress and inform needed adjustments in strategies is recommended. Regional goals and needs should be communicated to the state Legislature and state agencies, particularly the need for funding. Specific goals should be prioritized for transportation funding. More clarity in the plan review process and growth targets is desired. Recommendations from the Taking Stock 2016 report should be incorporated.</p> | |
| Introduction | 29 |
| <p>Strong support for the identified policy focus areas and inclusion of more diverse photos. General support for the vision statement. Minor text clarifications were suggested to clarify the narrative.</p> | |

| Topic and Summary | # of Comments |
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| Planning Process | 28 |
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Support for offering a variety of ways to view and comment on the draft plan and engaging a variety of stakeholders. The amount of content available for commenting was overwhelming for some.

Next Steps

Gathering public comments on the Draft VISION 2050 Plan is an important step in developing VISION 2050. PSRC has developed responses and staff recommendations to comments for the board’s consideration. At the November 7 Growth Management Policy Board meeting, the board will review what was heard and propose amendments to the draft plan, in advance of their recommendation to the Executive Board. Public comments will also be available for the Executive Board to consider as they review the Growth Management Policy Board recommendation.

VISION 2050 Adoption

The Growth Management Policy Board, after considering all public comments, will recommend the revised draft VISION 2050 plan to the Executive Board for adoption. In early 2020, a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) will be issued with updates to the environmental analysis on the multicounty planning policies, preferred growth alternative, and the three alternatives presented in the Draft SEIS. PSRC’s Executive Board is expected to recommend adoption of VISION 2050 in the spring of 2020. Adoption of VISION 2050 is scheduled to occur by PSRC’s General Assembly later that spring. Members of the public can continue providing comments to the Growth Management Policy Board and Executive Board during the public comment portion of board meetings or by submitting written comments via email, mail, or fax to PSRC.

