Equity has been widely identified as a critical regional issue for VISION 2050, the region’s long-range growth plan. Recognizing that equity is a sensitive and complex issue, PSRC held a Peer Networking work session on December 7, 2018 focused on equity to identify strategies that have the greatest promise for consideration by the Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB) for VISION 2050 or PSRC’s future work program. The work session included presentations from guest experts and round table discussions to consider how regional planning efforts can promote equity at the local level. Presentations and materials shared at the work session are available online.

Four themes were consistent throughout the small group discussions: 1) The need for data on displacement and other demographic changes to better inform more equitable planning; 2) The need for resources and tools to support local equity work, especially for smaller cities and towns; 3) The desire for VISION 2050 to be centered around advancing racial equity and recognition of the impacts the region’s growth will have on communities; and 4) The importance of working with historically underrepresented communities to ensure community voices are represented in regional planning. Notes from the small group discussions are available below.

What is the current state of regional equity? Are there barriers to regional impact on local equity? Competing interests? Lack of intersectional awareness or analysis? A de-centering of equity? Etc.

- Lack of acknowledgement of historical systematic racism
- Lack of will to address damage done/remedial/restorative justice
- Myth of inequity being a personal choice
- Boards largely white (men)
- Lack of regional baseline
- Policy is by consensus, not based on need
- No yard marks in comp plans?
- PSRC structure of governance is exclusionary (time, day, few community seats)
- Lack of regulatory power at PSRC
- Jurisdictions are different, any policy gets watered down
- No RSJ training for PSRC board and staff
- Conflict between desire for increasing tax base vs displacement (leadership vs regional directives)
- Lack of creditable/clean data (can PSRC champion at state)
- Policies that distribute resources equitably are controversial
- PSRC focuses on “access” “for all” (equality more than outcomes)
- Policy must be broad enough to multiple/varying contexts, yet compelling enough for a given community to act on it
- Lack of diversity/representation among decision making groups
- Activities like this should include member of/representatives of communities served
- Limit to what the regional plan can directly address (e.g. exclusionary zoning)
- Lack of regional plan
- Tax structure/ regional competition muni corps system
• Reflect on historical data/lack of it
• Equity over equality/focus equity
• Focus on people, outcomes/less policy outcomes (i.e. land use, jobs, etc.)
• Lack of willing partners at federal and state levels
• Thinking even beyond region
  o Fragmentation of government
  o What’s right/better model for regional government
• Lack of trust between community members and elected
• Challenge with data – generalizations lead to issues; scale and granularity
• Application of different county data (King is not equal to Snohomish)
• At county level – challenge considering plan/application between departments – decision-making
• Regional plan – guidance on how to operationalize at local or program level
• Lack of government/community/rural resources (e.g. staffing, knowledge around equity)
• Anti-Seattle centric ideas – resistance to ideas that come from bigger cities
• Institutional culture, lack of diverse representation
• Tension between economic development and local communities

**What could the future state of equity look like in the region?**

What would an effective regional impact on local equity look like?

• A resourced (money and technical assistance) equity expertise group at PSRC to help with decision making
• PSRC advocate for urban areas
• Proportional representation in legislative districts (cities not broken up)
• Structure for policies responsive to different jurisdiction’s needs (size, resource, urban/rural)
• People can get where they need regardless of income
• Investment structures/frameworks that are based on data—inform need (not loudest voice or “geographic equity”)
• RSJ training for new all board members, electeds, staff
• Policy acknowledgement of (historical) systemic racism and need to fix wrongs
• More diverse staff and board
• Board members show up for RSJ
• Incentives for equitable development – resource from PSRC for anti-displacement projects
• GMA reform – give PSRC more power to require stuff with RSJ outcomes
• Funding eligibility requirements/incentives
• Common data collection frameworks (common language, akin to SEPA checklist)
• Make room for qualitative as well as quantitative analysis
• Considering issues from a mid-point level (subregion) as opposed to jurisdiction by jurisdiction
• Relationship – building/connections between what issues we are not solving by addressing one issue or not
• Acknowledging effects of growth outside of future growth areas
• Ask ourselves tougher questions – How might we be perpetuating inequality?
• Policies with more “teeth” – specific
• More diverse participation/leadership in decision-making
• Intentional/operationalized public involvement
• How to change set viewpoints?
• Intentional allocation of funds toward equity – focused policy, equity lens in grant making
• Regional RET – institutionalize this process across the board

**Outcome**
- Replacement/repair/rebuild (e.g. Central District African American community)
- Proactive policy making around transit development
  - Example: affordable housing on surplus properties
  - Potential: purposeful acquisition of property to provide affordable housing
- Multi-jurisdictional plan to address displacement (less fragmented policy making) (e.g. stormwater)

**Regional toolkit or set of best practices for how to apply at different local scales**
- E.g. PSRC create resource with stakeholder input
- Recognizing resource availability at municipal level
- Toolkit should be trusted and useful at local level that meets PSRC needs

**Community designed/led policy/implementation**

**Inequities are addressed**

**PSRC toolkit (resources/networks/funding) to be used by local governments**

**PSRC has illustrated (use of variety of values to fit different locations, case studies, human/local examples) need for/benefits of equitable policy/racial equity**

**Strong MPPs**

**Resources and tools for smaller cities**

**Facilitate collaboration between cities**

**Leave space for local decision-making – consider the local context**

**Robust engagement plan**

**Data on actual displacement occurring, not just the risk of displacement**

**Preserve wealth and cultural institutions in at risk areas**

**Prioritize access to opportunity**

**Enshrine legal requirements in the plan**

**Giving equal tools to all people does not create equality outcomes**

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**How can the VISION 2050 vision statement center equity? How would this change how VISION 2050 is implemented?**

- Put equity at the front of the regional vision statement
- Explicitly address the structure that has led to institutionalized racism
- Consider Seattle’s decision to lead with racial equity
- Vision is that race doesn’t determine outcomes
- Involve communities most impacted to write the vision statement
- Many words in the existing vision statement don’t paint a picture of what the vision for the region is
- Include and define healthy communities
• It is important that the right people are in the room to craft a statement.
  o Groups most impacted should have prominent place in policy discussions.
• Focus on removing barriers to achieving equity, not ideals of equity.
• Make the statement a headline (“the Puget Sound region is a place where all people, regardless of race, achieve equal outcomes” vs. “strive for equitable outcomes regardless of race”)
• “Social equity” needs a definition
• Call out specific components of equity, and racial equity in particular
• Make the vision concise and the values detailed
• VISION 2040 feels like a statement of equality, not equity.
• Enrich, protect, and distribute resources
• Right historical wrongs