Regional Staff Committee

June 21, 2018 • 9:30 – 11:30 am
PSRC Board Room • 1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500 • Seattle, WA 98104

9:30  1. Welcome and Introductions – Andrea Spencer, City of Bremerton, Co-Chair

9:35  2. Public Comment

3. Reports:
   a. Meeting Summary for May 17, 2018*
   b. PSRC Board Reports*
   c. Updates from PSRC Planning Department

9:50  4. Discussion: July Growth Management Policy Board Housing Work Session*
      Paul Inghram and Laura Benjamin, PSRC

10:25 5. Discussion: Regional Growth Strategy Update in VISION 2050*
      Liz Underwood-Bultmann and Jeff Storrar, PSRC

11:00 6. Discussion: Regional Open Space Conservation Plan Update*
      Erika Harris, PSRC and Maria Sandercock, Ecology

7. Information Items:
   a. 2018 Regional Staff Committee Schedule*

8. Future Meeting: July 19, 2018, 9:30 am, PSRC Board Room (meeting length TBD)

11:30 9. Adjourn

*Supporting materials attached

Meeting Call-in Option Available Upon Request – Contact Casey Moreau, cmoreau@psrc.org
Welcome and Introductions, Public Comment

Andrea Spencer, Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. Co-Chair Spencer acknowledged new members to the Regional Staff Committee (RSC): Lacey Jane Wolfe, alternate for City of Bellevue; Stephanie Suter, alternate for Puget Sound Partnership; Meredith Soniat, City of Tacoma, BPAC representative; Eric Mendenhall, City of Sumner, alternate for Pierce County At-Large; Courtney Brunell, City of Lakewood, alternate for Pierce County At-Large.

Co-Chair Spencer acknowledged departing member Tom Hauger, City of Seattle, who is retiring. Co-Chair Spencer recognized Mr. Hauger for his many years of service with RSC and thanked him for his work and contributions with the city of Seattle.

Co-Chair Ben Bakkenta announced that PSRC staff member, Michael Hubner, will be leaving to join the City of Seattle. He’ll be filling Mr. Hauger’s position.

There were around the room introductions.

There was no public comment.

Reports

Co-Chair Bakkenta introduced a new member of staff, Ben Kahn, Assistant Planner.

Co-Chair Bakkenta shared that the RSC Co-Chairs’ VISION 2050 Working Session met this past Monday, May 14. The working sessions will typically be held following the RSC meetings. The exception was made this week due to the Peer Networking event today.

Co-Chair Bakkenta reminded committee members of the upcoming General Assembly. Registration is on the PSRC website.

Presentations from the meeting are available on the PSRC website: https://www.psrc.org/rsc-meetings.
VISION 2050 Survey Results

Laura Benjamin shared results from a public opinion survey that was fielded in March 2018. The survey was to gauge public sentiment on growth and growth-related issues. The information was shared with the Growth Management Policy Board (GMPB) earlier in May.

Ms. Benjamin provided information on the research methodology for the public opinion survey. It was a scientifically valid survey of residents in the four-county region. She reviewed with the committee key findings from the survey, discussing general opinion on quality of life, access, growth and development, housing, greenhouse gas emissions. Ms. Benjamin shared comparisons of past studies, conducted in 1993 and 2003, with the current survey results. Ms. Benjamin also discussed variations of responses for each of the counties.

A second wave of the survey is being conducted now. The survey is online, available in six languages and open through the summer. Because the survey is open to all and self-selecting, it will not be scientifically valid.

There was a question if the survey asked what types of housing were unaffordable. Ms. Benjamin noted that the survey did not specify. There was a suggestion to avoid using the phrase, “less traffic congestion”, and to use alternate language in surveys. A committee member asked if the follow up survey would clarify what survey respondents don’t like about homelessness. Ms. Benjamin noted that the second survey offers a written response option which could capture more detail. There is a split between those concerned about the impacts of homelessness on their community versus those concerned with a population whose needs are not being met.

For more information, contact Laura Benjamin, PSRC (206) 464-7134, lbenjamin@psrc.org or Paul Inghram, (206) 464-7549, pinghram@psrc.org.

VISION 2050

Paul Inghram provided an update on the scoping report. The GMPB reviewed the scoping report at the May meeting and asked for further updates. The scoping report will go back to the board with incorporated edits in June. A GMPB VISION 2050 subcommittee was formed to provide guidance on the VISION update and help inform staff if the scoping report addressed comments raised at the GMPB meeting.

A Peer Networking event on Housing would be held following the RSC meeting. The event will provide an opportunity to discuss promising strategies and those to support at the regional level. The discussions at the event will help set up the housing discussion at the GMPB July meeting. Ms. Underwood-Bultmann shared information on the Housing Background Paper available on the PSRC website.

Mr. Inghram discussed the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) Work Plan schedule. A committee member suggested focusing on what type of housing is in demand and clarification of which type of housing is unaffordable. Committee members commented that there’s an opportunity for education on cost trade-offs for development of different housing types, there needs to be an understanding of zoning for industrial land, and suggested providing the GMPB with background on the relationship between the RGS and the multicounty planning policies.

Ms. Underwood-Bultmann discussed the RGS, providing background and reviewing its objectives. She asked the committee for input on the objectives in preparation for the VISION update. Committee members suggested adding objectives to: build around the transit commitments in the region, direct growth away from the edge of the UGA, address health outcomes, look at industrial needs, include equity and social justice, incorporate changing technology, address livability of urban areas, account for displacement, and consider the balance of housing and jobs with a focus on the types of jobs in an area related to the cost of housing. Committee members suggested clarifying the objective regarding minimizing growth in the rural area and using language such as “critical areas” or “environmentally sensitive areas” when referring to natural environment.

Other suggestions made by the committee:

- Make objectives more readable and understandable to general public.
- Reinforce investment in infrastructure by focusing growth in centers and corridors, rather than category of cities.
- Need a better statement around the infrastructure objective that is more encompassing of transportation and services, and clarifies what is meant by infrastructure.
Include giving a finer grain distinction on infill and redevelopment.
Centers framework may offer ways to discuss goals for the rural area

Ms. Underwood-Bultmann reviewed the definitions of regional geographies. She reviewed key themes of comments received during the scoping period. Ms. Underwood-Bultmann reviewed preliminary concepts for revised regional geographies. She invited the committee to provide feedback.

- There was a suggestion to include a focus on regionally designated Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.
- Question of how to address capacity in some designations, need to address capacity in unincorporated urban areas and how to classify unincorporated areas while using transit as the key factor.
- Encourage rethink of regional geographies based on objectives of the RGS, considering attributes (location, transit service) and objectives to decide how much growth should go in a location.
- Have primary, secondary and tertiary locations for growth, independent of incorporation status
- Consider roles of cities in region.
- Consider the challenge of existing land capacity in the unincorporated area and overall capacity in the urban growth area
- Consider financial sustainability for cities and counties, particularly related to annexation.
- Add an objective to use resources for land and infrastructure in general more efficiently. Focus on natural environment and include specifics for what we mean about maintaining the natural environment.

GMPB will receive a presentation on the RGS in June. Comments heard at today’s RSC meeting will be incorporated in the conversation.

For more information, contact Liz Underwood-Bultmann, PSRC (206) 464-6174, lunderwoodbultmann@psrc.org, or Paul Inghram, (206) 464-7549, pingham@psrc.org.

2017 Household Travel Survey Highlights

Brian Lee shared that PSRC has implemented a multi-year program for Household Travel Surveys, carrying out smaller surveys more frequently. The multi-year program allows for more current data, better budgeting, continuity within labor roles and predictability for jurisdictions to purchase add-ons for their own use.

The Travel Household Survey is essentially a snapshot of peoples’ travel and activities. Mr. Lee discussed what information the survey collects and how the data analysis is then used at PSRC. He shared details of the most recent 2017 survey sample and design. Mr. Lee also provided highlights from the Household Travel Survey data analysis.

Mr. Lee detailed that in 2019, PSRC is expecting to use the same survey instrument with minor edits and similar sample sizes. When 2019 is completed, combined 2017-2019 weights will be developed to expand the survey to provide an average snapshot of the region, similar to the American Community Survey. PSRC will be estimating models with this data and consider plans for 2021.

A committee member asked if there was enough data for modeling purposes without any add-ons. Mr. Lee stated that he is in contact with other MPOs in a national conversation about surveying. Without any add-ons from other jurisdictions, there would still be enough data for modeling when multiple years are combined.

For more information, contact Brian Lee, PSRC, (206) 971-3270, blee@psrc.org.

Information
Co-Chair Spencer noted that the Peer Networking event on Housing will follow at 12:00 pm today in the PSRC Board Room.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am. Next meeting: Thursday, June 21, 2018, 9:30 – 11:30 am
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<td>Terry Cullen, Comprehensive Planning</td>
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<td>Lacey Jane Wolfe, Transportation Policy, Alt. 1</td>
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<td>Jason Sullivan, Bonney Lake, Plan. &amp; Build.</td>
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<td>Barb Mock, Planning &amp; Dev, RSC Co-Chair</td>
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<td>Roland Behee, Community Transit</td>
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<td>Shane Hope, Edmonds, Development Serv.</td>
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**2018 Reps Confirmed**

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**PSRC Committees**

| Bremerton (1) | Andrea Spencer, Comm Dev, RSC Co-Chair PSRC Co-Chair (1) |
|              | Allison Satter, Comm Dev., Alt. |
|              | Nick Bond, Community Dev., Port Orchard |
| Pierce Co. Transit (1) | Darin Stavish, Pierce Transit (PSRC TOC Member) |

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The General Assembly met May 31, 2018, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm. Details of the event were featured on the PSRC blog and information about the General Assembly is posted on the PSRC website.

The Growth Management Policy Board met June 7, 2018, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. The “At Work Summary” of the meeting is available on the GMPB meeting materials page.

For information on the GMPB, contact Paul Inghram, Program Manager, pinghram@psrc.org, 206-464-7549.

The Transportation Policy Board met June 14, 9:30 – 11:30 am. The “At Work Summary” of the meeting will be available on the TPB meeting materials page.

For information on the TPB, contact Kelly McGourty, Senior Program Manager, kmcgourty@psrc.org, 206-971-3601.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Staff Committee

FROM: Pau Inghram, Senior Program Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council

SUBJECT: July Growth Management Policy Board Housing Work Session

In Brief

Staff will brief the committee on recent work on housing and seek the committee’s input on the Growth Management Policy Board’s forthcoming work session on housing.

Background

Housing has been repeatedly noted as a critical regional issue, including during the Taking Stock 2016 review, during early discussions with the Growth Management Policy Board, in the comments received during VISION 2050 scoping, and the public opinion survey.

There have been many planning efforts working to address housing, such as the state’s recent HART report, and King County’s ongoing Regional Affordable Housing Task Force. The objective of VISION 2050 will not be to replicate other efforts and it will be important to support the Growth Management Policy Board’s discussion with a focus on what can be done at a regional level.

Housing in VISION 2040

VISION 2040 encourages housing production that meets existing and future needs. It calls for preserving and expanding housing affordability, incorporating quality and environmentally friendly design in homebuilding, and offering healthy and safe home choices for all the region’s residents. See Attachment A for the full Housing chapter in VISION 2040.

VISION 2040 includes two actions to support housing goals and policies:

1. Develop a regional housing strategy, including a regional needs assessment

2. Establish a regional housing program to support that strategy

Taken together, these actions were envisioned as core elements of a coordinated regional approach to housing with PSRC complementing and adding value to local housing efforts. However, during the recession and early years of recovery, housing affordability became a lower priority for regional action. The VISION 2050 update is an opportunity to renew efforts to bring existing and new work together around a sustained regional strategy for housing and housing affordability.
Housing in the Growing Transit Communities Strategy

The Growing Transit Communities Strategy is a three-part implementation plan to promote thriving and equitable transit communities in the central Puget Sound region and to provide tools and resources to implement adopted regional and local plans. Housing, specifically affordable housing, is a central theme of the strategy. The strategy sets as a goal to “provide housing choices affordable to a full range of incomes near high-capacity transit.”

The strategy sets numeric goals to support and realize the benefits of a compact pattern of housing growth. Transit communities are expected to attract at least 25% of housing growth in the region through the year 2040. The strategy also states that new housing units should be proportional to regional-wide affordability needs, which are approximately:

- 18% of HH – 50-80% AMI (Moderate Income/Workforce)
- 12% of HH – 30-50% AMI (Low Income)
- 13% of HH—Less than 30% AMI (Very Low Income)

The Regional TOD Committee will review the GTC Strategy and housing objectives at its June 15 meeting.

Housing Paper & Peer Networking Event

Recognizing that housing is a vast and complicated issue, PSRC started early work on housing to update data and engage stakeholders. PSRC released a draft Housing Background Paper, available online.

PSRC held a Peer Networking event focused on housing to identify strategies that have the greatest promise for consideration for VISION 2050 or PSRC’S future work program. The event reviewed nearly 75 housing-related strategies in six different categories:

- Housing supply
- Affordable housing incentives
- Funding and financing
- Displacement and preservation
- Tenant protections
- Assessment, monitoring, and reporting

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support each of the areas of housing and, where possible, identified priority strategies (Attachment B). Three themes throughout the discussions were:

1) Recognition that housing is a regional issue and there is a need for greater regional coordination and consistency
2) The need for additional technical assistance, data, and monitoring
3) Strategically leverage affordable housing opportunities in high growth areas, such as transit communities
Recognizing the complexity of the housing topic and the number of potential housing-related strategies, it will be important to identify what areas have the most value for the board to discuss and to apply to VISION 2050. The feedback received during the Peer Networking event will benefit from review by the committee and discussion of how to best distill and present information.

Questions for the committee:

- What are efficient ways to organize the board’s review of the current chapter?
- Is anything missing from the policies and/or actions (excluding the need to update outdated information) in the current VISION 2040 Housing chapter?
- How can the feedback from the Peer Networking event be distilled into key problem statements to focus the GMPB’s July discussion?
- What roles can PSRC, counties, cities and other agencies play to implement these housing strategies?

Next Steps

The committee’s feedback will help staff organize materials for the GMPB’s July 5 extended session on housing, including how to focus small group discussions. Following the GMPB’s July 5 meeting, staff will work with stakeholders and the Regional Staff Committee to further assess and develop options for how VISION 2050 can better address housing needs in the region.

Lead Staff

For more information, please contact Paul Inghram at 206-464-7549 or PInghram@psrc.org, or Laura Benjamin at 206-464-7143 or LBenjamin@psrc.org.

Attachments:
A – VISION 2040 Housing Chapter
B – Summary of Feedback from Peer Networking Housing Work Session
Overarching Goal: The region will preserve, improve, and expand its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident. The region will continue to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.

Housing is a basic need for every individual. With the opportunities and challenges that come with growth and new development, the region must be attentive to how we address the housing needs of the region’s population while protecting our environment, supporting our economy, and enhancing our communities. Our success depends on ensuring the availability of a variety of housing types and densities, as well as an adequate supply of housing affordable at all income levels, to meet the diverse needs of both current and future residents.

VISION 2040’s housing policies respond to changing demographics and the need to diversify the region’s housing supply. The policies address affordability, jobs-housing balance, focusing housing in centers, and innovations in housing.

The Growth Management Act calls for making affordable housing available to “all economic segments of the population,” providing a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encouraging preservation of existing housing stock. Local governments are to plan for housing that meets the varied needs of their diverse communities and residents and to ensure they are providing sufficient zoned land capacity for housing to accommodate 20-year growth targets. To this end, a primary goal of the Act is to facilitate sufficient and appropriate housing production and supply.

A sustainable community is one that has a stable mix of residents and workers at different income levels, living and working right in the community. Affordability is a key element for ensuring sustainable housing. Sustainable homes rely on efficient building techniques that allow for the reuse and recycling of materials, or the use of new materials that come from sources that can be more rapidly renewed. As housing stocks increase to accommodate the region’s growth, there are a number of steps that can be taken to improve the sustainability, efficiency, and comfort of our homes.

What the Region Can Do. The complexity of addressing the full range of housing needs and challenges requires a coordinated regional-local approach. Through VISION 2040 and its regional housing policies and actions, the Puget Sound Regional Council is in a position to work with its member jurisdictions on housing both today’s and tomorrow’s population, including our children, grandchildren, and new residents.

The Sustainable Home and Green Building
Conserving resources and reducing environmental impacts can literally begin at home. Efficient fixtures, appliances, and landscaping can help conserve water and energy. New systems and technology provide opportunities for the reuse of wastewater. Improved indoor air quality and increased daylight contribute to better health and comfort. More efficient sources of energy allow each household to decrease the amount of carbons entering the atmosphere and can save money as well.

Through the Regional Growth Strategy, the region has articulated a preferred pattern of urbanization that will help direct new housing development to the urban growth area and regionally designated growth centers. By prioritizing the investment of regionally managed funding to support housing, affordable housing, and infrastructure projects in regional growth centers, the Regional Council can help promote strategically located workforce housing and improved access to and between major employment centers.

To assist counties and cities, the Regional Council can serve as a forum for setting regional priorities and facilitating coordination among its member jurisdictions and housing interest groups. A key tool is the development of a regional housing strategy.

Through guidance and technical assistance, the Regional Council can encourage jurisdictions to adopt best housing practices and establish coordinated local housing
Local Housing Responsibilities
Under the Growth Management Act

Local housing elements should ensure the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods and include the following components: (1) an inventory and analysis of existing and projected housing needs, (2) goals, policies, objectives, and mandatory provisions for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing, (3) identification of sufficient land for a range of housing types to match community needs, and (4) adequate provisions for the needs of all economic segments of the community. (RCW 36.70A.070)

Under the Act’s buildable lands provisions, local governments must also determine whether there is sufficient zoned land to accommodate their county’s 20-year population projection and the local growth target allocations adopted by counties and their cities. Reasonable measures must be taken to address any inconsistencies. (RCW 36.70A.215)

A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH)

This coalition — which includes King County and 15 Eastside cities — was organized to preserve and increase the supply of housing for low- and moderate-income households. ARCH supports a wide range of local organizations to produce housing that serves families, seniors, the homeless, and people with special needs.

Addressing Homelessness

In 2005, the Washington Legislature directed counties to develop ten-year homeless plans (RCW 43.185C). The minimum goal is to eliminate 50 percent of homelessness by 2015. All four counties in the central Puget Sound region now have ten-year plans. The counties must also conduct a count of homeless persons each year and provide annual reports. The legislation identifies proposed strategies in three areas: (1) prevention and reentry strategies, to keep individuals from slipping into homelessness, (2) short-term emergency responses, to move people rapidly from homelessness, and (3) affordable permanent housing services, to assist people in maintaining stable housing.

Universal Design

Universal design involves designing products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible — regardless of special needs or age — without requiring adaptation or specialized design.
Affordability. Housing affordability continues to be a major challenge for the region. Housing costs are a greater burden for many households today than a decade ago, leaving less for other basic needs and amenities. Renters, in particular, face a considerable shortage of affordable housing opportunities.

With housing prices significantly outpacing income growth over the last several years, it has become more difficult for low-, moderate-, and even middle-income households to purchase first homes. Homeownership rates in King and Pierce counties lag behind the national average, and rates for minorities remain well below the average rate for all households.

Paying a mortgage or rent is only a portion of the overall cost of housing. To address housing affordability more completely, it is also important to account for utility costs, insurance and taxes, appliances and furniture expenditures, and repair and maintenance, including yard care. Expenses for commuting to and from work and for travel to services and other daily destinations are also critical factors when considering the true costs of housing.

Finding affordable housing options near employment centers can be difficult for many workers. Low- to middle-wage workers — such as teachers, health care professionals, retail workers, administrative personnel, police officers, and firefighters — who are essential to the economic and social vitality of a community, often cannot afford to live in the places where they work. The imbalance between where people live and where people work can result in longer and more expensive commutes. More driving also leads to worsening air quality, including greenhouse gas emissions.

VISION 2040 calls for increasing the supply of housing throughout the region by providing a variety of housing types and densities for both renters and owners. Special emphasis is placed on providing equitably distributed affordable housing for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households and appropriate housing for special needs populations. It also encourages more low- to middle-income homeownership opportunities.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is commonly defined in terms of housing costs as a percentage of household income. Housing is considered unaffordable when a household’s monthly housing costs exceed a certain threshold — most commonly 30 percent of gross income — thereby reducing the budget available for basic necessities and other amenities.

Housing Affordability

Housing affordability refers to the balance (or imbalance) between incomes and housing costs within a community or region. A common measurement compares the number of households in certain income categories to the number of units in the market that are affordable — at 30 percent of gross income.

VISION 2040 uses the following household income categories and definitions to track regional housing affordability:
- Middle: 80%-120% of area median income
- Moderate: 50%-80% of area median income
- Low: Below 50% of area median income
- Very Low: Below 30% area median income

Workforce Housing

Workforce housing refers to housing that is affordable to households with at least one full-time worker in which earned incomes are too high to qualify for significant federal housing subsidies, and which — given local housing market conditions — have difficulty affording market prices for homes or apartments in the communities where the residents work.

See also “Family Wage” sidebar in the Economy section.

Special Needs Housing

Special needs housing refers to supportive housing arrangements for populations with specialized requirements, such as the physically and mentally disabled, the elderly, people with medical conditions (for example, HIV/AIDS, Alzheimer’s, and chemical dependency), the homeless, victims of domestic violence, foster youth, refugees, and others.
**Percent Gross Monthly Income Spent on Housing Costs**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Note: For homeowners, housing costs are defined as including monthly payments for mortgage principal and interest, real estate taxes, property insurance, utilities and fuels, and condominium and mobile home fees. For renters, housing costs include contract rent plus the estimated monthly cost of utilities and fuels, whether paid by the renter or someone else.

**Jobs-Housing Balance.** Jobs-housing balance is a concept that advocates an appropriate match between the jobs base and available housing supply within a geographic area. Balance is a means to address travel demand by improving accessibility to jobs, as well as to goods, services, and amenities. Improving balance means adding more housing to job-rich areas and more jobs to housing-rich areas. There is also an affordability aspect to achieving balance that involves matching the mix of dwelling types and prices with labor force needs and wages.

Better mobility and efficiency can also improve jobs-housing balance. For example, convenient and efficient travel to major job centers, especially because of easy accessibility to high-capacity transit, can also serve some of the objectives of balancing jobs and housing. Facilitating travel by transit also serves to reduce vehicle miles traveled — which benefits air quality and the climate — and offers mobility options for residents who do not drive or have access to vehicles. Ensuring that services are located near home or work also helps to reduce travel demands.

VISION 2040 encourages adding housing opportunities to job-rich places, and promotes economic development to bring jobs to all four counties — with special attention given to Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties. (See also “Places” subsection under Economy.)

**Focusing Housing into the Urban Area.** Another key growth management goal is to focus new development within the urban growth area. Within the central Puget Sound region emphasis is placed on directing housing and jobs into centers — that is, places designated for higher densities and a mix of land uses. Communities all across the region are realizing these aims by encouraging infill, redevelopment, and more compact development, including in designated centers and around transit stations.

VISION 2040 continues to advance the centers strategy as a way to provide greater accessibility to employment. In this approach, centers function as major concentrations of jobs and housing, which can be easily accessed from nearby neighborhoods and communities, and are linked by a highly efficient, high-capacity transportation network.

**Innovations and Best Practices.** There are numerous incentives and tools that local jurisdictions can work with to help increase the overall supply and diversity of housing, including: (1) innovative land use practices, such as flexible zoning, streamlined development regulations, and density bonuses, (2) funding approaches, such as housing levies and tax exemptions, (3) provision of needed infrastructure and public services, such as transportation facilities and services, utilities, parks, and other amenities, and (4) public education to increase awareness and acceptance of housing alternatives and innovations, such as accessory dwelling units, small lot single-family homes, townhomes and other multifamily housing options, and mixed-use projects. Such techniques and practices offer greater affordability and promote more efficient use of urban land.
It is also important to provide homeowners and renters with more complete information on the true costs of housing — that is, costs beyond mortgage and rent payments. Information on innovative private sector programs can also help individuals and families identify affordable housing opportunities. One example is a location efficient mortgage, which adjusts the amount that can be borrowed based on proximity of the home to transit. The rationale behind this program is that if a household has the ability to use transit regularly, it may eliminate the need to own one or more automobiles. Not having additional car payments and related maintenance costs provides more buying power for that household, making mortgages more affordable.

VISION 2040 encourages local jurisdictions to adopt available best housing practices and innovative techniques to advance the provision of affordable, healthy, and safe housing for all the region’s residents.

**HOUSING POLICIES**

**Housing diversity and affordability:**

**MPP-H-1:** Provide a range of housing types and choices to meet the housing needs of all income levels and demographic groups within the region.

**MPP-H-2:** Achieve and sustain — through preservation, rehabilitation, and new development — a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of low-income, moderate-income, middle-income, and special needs individuals and households that is equitably and rationally distributed throughout the region.

**MPP-H-3:** Promote homeownership opportunities for low-income, moderate-income, and middle-income families and individuals.

**Jobs-housing balance:**

**MPP-H-4:** Develop and provide a range of housing choices for workers at all income levels throughout the region in a manner that promotes accessibility to jobs and provides opportunities to live in proximity to work.

**Centers housing:**

**MPP-H-5:** Expand the supply and range of housing, including affordable units, in centers throughout the region.

**MPP-H-6:** Recognize and give regional funding priority to transportation facilities, infrastructure, and services that explicitly advance the development of housing in designated regional growth centers. Give additional priority to projects and services that advance affordable housing.

**Best housing practices:**

**MPP-H-7:** Encourage jurisdictions to review and streamline development standards and regulations to advance their public benefit, provide flexibility, and minimize additional costs to housing.

**MPP-H-8:** Encourage the use of innovative techniques to provide a broader range of housing types for all income levels and housing needs.

**MPP-H-9:** Encourage interjurisdictional cooperative efforts and public-private partnerships to advance the provision of affordable and special needs housing.
VISION 2040 HOUSING ACTIONS

The following VISION 2040 actions have been developed to help implement the housing policies. Detailed information on specific measures that will be used to monitor implementation and performance is contained in Part IV: Implementation.

REGIONAL HOUSING ACTIONS

Regional Housing Strategy: H-Action-1

The Puget Sound Regional Council, together with its member jurisdictions, housing interest groups, and housing professionals, will develop a comprehensive regional housing strategy. The housing strategy will provide the framework for a regional housing program (see H-Action-2, below) and shall include the following components:

1. A regional housing needs assessment
2. Strategies to promote and/or address: housing diversity, housing affordability, special needs housing, centers and workforce housing, innovative techniques, and best local housing planning practices
3. Coordination with other regional and local housing efforts

- Short-term / H-1 through 9
- Results and Products: regional housing strategy

Regional Housing Program: H-Action-2

The Puget Sound Regional Council will develop and implement a program to encourage best housing practices and stimulate local housing production, including affordable housing. The program will make planning for housing more transparent and shall include the following components:

1. Guidance for developing local housing targets (including affordable housing targets), model housing elements, and best housing practices
2. Regional guidelines for and the review of local housing elements, that call for documentation of strategies and implementation plans for meeting housing targets and goals, i.e., a “show your housing work” provision
3. Technical assistance to support local jurisdictions in developing effective housing strategies and programs
4. Collection and analysis of regional housing data as part of the region’s monitoring program, including types and uses of housing

- Short- to mid-term / H-1 through 9
- Results and Products: (1) guidance and best practices, (2) regional review of local housing elements, (3) technical assistance for local governments, (4) monitoring of regional housing data and trends
Housing has been repeatedly noted as a critical regional issue for VISION 2050, the region’s long-range growth plan. Recognizing that housing is a vast and complicated issue, PSRC held a Peer Networking work session on May 17, 2018 focused on housing 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 a range of strategies for housing supply, incentives for affordable housing, funding and financing, displacement and preservation, tenant protections, and monitoring and reporting. Presentations and materials shared at the work session are available online.

Three themes were consistent throughout the small group discussions: 1) Recognition that housing is a regional issue and there is a need for greater regional coordination and consistency; 2) the need for additional technical assistance, data, and monitoring; and 3) strategically leverage affordable housing opportunities in high growth areas, such as transit communities. Participants identified common challenges of limited financial resources, political challenges, and the need to implement multiple strategies to tackle this complex policy area. The summaries below highlight key themes and areas of general consensus from the small group discussions. A more detailed report out of the small group discussions is available online.

**Housing Supply**

Increasing the supply of housing of all types can help to relieve market pressures and accommodate growth for years to come. Tools and strategies to increase the overall housing supply include: plans and regulations that allow and encourage sufficient housing supply, especially by increasing residential capacity near transit and jobs; plans and zoning that accommodate multiple housing types to diversify the housing stock, provide more affordable options, and meet the needs of various household types; and provisions to make housing easier and faster to build.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support housing supply strategies, including:

- Focus housing growth in areas with existing infrastructure and services, and access to transit
- Technical assistance to ensure development regulations do not prevent zoned capacity from being realized
- Community education and outreach
Many participants noted that strategies to increase and diversify housing supply are often less technically challenging than other aspects of housing, but public opposition is often the strongest.

**Affordable Housing Incentives**
Incentives support affordable housing by leveraging market activity and by reducing the cost of developing affordable units for housing developers. Incentives fall into three broad categories: incentives for market rate developers to build affordable units; incentives that reduce the costs for developers of affordable units; and incentives and other supports for local government housing efforts, such as technical support.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support affordable housing incentives, including:
- Provide legal clarity on affordable housing incentives to jurisdictions
- Educate elected officials and the public on housing needs and how incentives can help
- Model ordinances and codes to advance best practices and promote consistency among jurisdictions
- Support of specialized housing planner at PSRC to assist with education, technical assistance, and model ordinances

Many participants underscored the technical difficulty of developing and implementing successful incentives, specifically the challenges of balancing the level of incentive with the public benefit, and the need to layer or package incentives to be desirable to developers.

**Funding and Financing**
Funding affordable housing is complicated. To increase the overall funding available, existing funding sources can be increased and expanded, new funding sources can be created, and stakeholders can help to better link private and public funding sources.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support funding and financing strategies, including:
- Advocacy for new revenue sources
- Research and technical assistance on the potential impacts of new revenue sources
- Model strategies for affordable land assembly and acquisition to advance best practices and promote consistency among jurisdictions
- Coordinating regional employers to develop a voluntary employers fund or other philanthropic loan or grant fund

Participants noted that while new revenue sources present great opportunity, they also stand against opposition and competing funding needs.
Displacement and Preservation

There are policies that can help extend the life of subsidized housing and tools to keep “naturally occurring” affordable housing in the private market from becoming more expensive. These include financial incentives, often in the form of tax credits and fee waivers, for maintaining affordable rental prices. Special funds can also be made available to rehabilitate a property in exchange for maintaining affordability.

Preservation also encompasses efforts to maintain the safety and soundness of affordable homes. Local governments can help ensure that homes comply with local codes and property owners bring them up to standard as necessary.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support anti-displacement and preservation strategies, including:

- Displacement risk analysis and other region-wide data on neighborhood change indicators, with focus on communities with current and future high capacity transit stations
- Model ordinances to prevent and mitigate displacement to advance best practices and promote consistency among jurisdictions
- Education and outreach on existing resources for senior to age in place

Similar to affordable housing incentives, many participants underscored the technical difficulty of developing and implementing successful incentives to preserve neighborhoods, specifically the challenges of balancing the level of incentive with the public benefit, and the need to layer or package incentives to be desirable to property owners.

Tenant Protections

Many residents experience inequities in access to safe housing that meets their needs. Without the enforcement of proper protections, many tenants living on low incomes experience discrimination, poor housing conditions, and unhealthy housing. Most tools relating to tenant protections focus on enforcement of local codes and other regulations when tenants are in a home. Additional strategies focus on equal access to homes and address the application process. Incentives can promote the construction and retrofitting of units to be accessible for people with special needs and different abilities.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support tenant protections strategies, including:

- Provide resources and information for tenants about their rights
- Model tenant protection policies to advance best practices and promote consistency among jurisdictions
- Provide legal clarity for jurisdictions
Many participants underscored the need for education and outreach on existing tenant protections. Several jurisdictions have enacted strong tenant protections, but residents are unaware of these existing and new regulations.

Assessment, Monitoring, and Reporting
Assessment, monitoring, and reporting on data and trends over time can help with the success of housing plans and programs. This can include assessments of housing needs, monitoring implementation and outcomes, and reporting to elected officials and the public. Ongoing reporting can be technically challenging and resource-intensive. Coordinated reporting efforts, sharing of resources, and technical support can help to create long-term and consistent analysis to fully understand the opportunities and gaps in local and regional markets and to better align policies and regulations with desired outcomes.

Participants in small group discussions identified a variety of ways in which regional coordination through VISION 2050 can support assessment, monitoring, and reporting strategies, including:

- Consistent data resources and methodology, with ability to roll up local data and analysis at higher levels, such as subareas
- A regional data dashboard to report key metrics for cities, counties, and the region to support local jurisdictions’ ability to conduct effective monitoring
- Promote partnerships between local jurisdictions and non-profit and private sector groups to collect and analyze data, such as the City of Bellevue’s partnership with Microsoft and King County’s work with the Housing Development Consortium

Participants underscored that assessment and monitoring is very difficult for smaller jurisdictions with limited staff and resources.

Next Steps
This Peer Networking session identified many ideas and strategies for PSRC boards to consider in updating VISION. PSRC’s Growth Management Policy Board will hold an extended session in July 2018 to discuss housing. Discussion of these ideas and strategies will be critical for understanding and setting regional and local goals for housing in the short-term and through the year 2050.
MEMORANDUM

June 21, 2018

TO: Regional Staff Committee

FROM: Paul Inghram, AICP, Senior Program Manager

SUBJECT: Regional Growth Strategy Update in VISION 2050

In Brief

PSRC staff will provide an overview of the Growth Management Policy Board’s June 7th discussion on initial direction on Regional Growth Strategy objectives and refinements of regional geographies for the VISION 2050 update. PSRC staff will also present several preliminary concepts for the committee to review and seek input on options for modifying the Regional Growth Strategy.

Discussion

The Regional Staff Committee discussed the Regional Growth Strategy at its May meeting, providing input on objectives and classification of areas into regional geographies. At its June 7 meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board had its first extended session to understand background and performance of the Regional Growth Strategy and discuss objectives and regional geographies. This memo will summarize the board discussion and outline preliminary concepts on ways to extend the Regional Growth Strategy out to 2050.

Objectives for the Regional Growth Strategy Update

At the heart of VISION 2040 is a shared vision of how and where the region should grow. The Regional Growth Strategy provides a description of an overall development pattern that the central Puget Sound region should assume over time. It also provides guidance for how counties, cities and towns can contribute to achieving that preferred pattern while minimizing the environmental impacts of growth and making efficient use of existing infrastructure and investments. The overall strategy for accommodating growth is organized around the state Growth Management Act’s concepts of urban, rural, natural resource areas.

The Regional Growth Strategy reflects this region's commitment to plan for the future in a way that preserves and enhances communities, conserves natural and financial resources, and maintains quality of life. This approach helps to ensure that existing services are fully utilized, new services can be provided more efficiently, and minimize the environmental impacts of growth. The adoption of VISION 2040 reflects the commitment to work together to address regional issues.

VISION 2040 describes the following objectives for the Regional Growth Strategy:
- The overall natural environment is restored, protected, and sustained.
- Population and employment growth is focused within the designated urban growth area.
- Within the urban growth area, growth is focused in cities.
- Within cities, centers serve as concentrations of jobs, housing, and other activities.
- A better balance of job locations and housing is achieved, facilitated, and supported by incentives and investments.
- Rural development is minimized.
- Resource lands are permanently protected, supporting the continued viability of resource-based industries, such as forestry and agriculture.
- Existing infrastructure and new investments are used more efficiently and effectively, and are prioritized for areas that are planning for and accommodating growth.
- Meaningful steps are taken to reduce carbon emissions and minimize the region’s contribution to climate change.

In May, the Regional Staff Committee discussed these objectives and comments by multiple committee members suggested that the objectives should address the following:

- Acknowledge access to different types of jobs and housing
- Emphasize leveraging major transit and infrastructure investments
- Support public health
- Address social equity and displacement

Others noted that the objective for the rural area should be restated, the objectives should discuss quality of life, and the strategy should discuss focusing growth away from the edge of the urban growth boundary. Members also commented that the strategy should use more publicly accessible language and be more people-oriented.

At their June meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board was provided background information on the Regional Growth Strategy and reviewed the original objectives, as well as the comments from Regional Staff Committee above.

The board was asked to discuss whether they still support the growth strategy objectives adopted in VISION 2040, and/or whether there are additional things the region should achieve with the growth strategy. Based on board discussion, there was general support for the original objectives, but agreement that the objectives are fairly high level and should be more specific about desired qualities. An emphasis on having objectives that are more measurable and that describe the intent and desired action was expressed.

A common theme—and identified as an important issue to address regionally—was housing. The discussion included numerous topics related to affordable housing and jobs-housing balance, such as ensuring the region matching housing needs with jobs and incomes and the possibility of setting housing minimums.

Other topics the board identified that should be considered were:

- Leveraging transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities
- Health and equity
- Resiliency
- Protection of industrial uses and freight corridors
• Factoring in future innovation and change
• Flexibility and adaptability for local circumstance
• Ongoing metrics and evaluation of the growth strategy

Refinements to Regional Geographies

To implement the Regional Growth Strategy and the objectives described above, the Regional Growth Strategy includes regional geographies as a framework for assigning shares of population and employment growth based on the ability of different types of places to accommodate housing and jobs and their role within the broader region. Within counties, the geographies are a starting point for countywide processes to allocate GMA growth targets in a more detailed way to individual jurisdictions.

Regional geographies in VISION 2040 include:

- **Metropolitan Cities.** Seattle, Bellevue, Bremerton, Everett, and Tacoma
- **Core Cities.** All other cities with designated regional growth centers
- **Larger Cities.** Cities with a combined population and employment total over 22,500
- **Small Cities.** All other cities and town, most smaller than 10,000 population
- **Unincorporated Urban Growth Areas.** All unincorporated areas within the urban growth area
- **Rural Areas.** Areas designated rural by the counties
- **Natural Resource Lands.** Areas designated agriculture, forest, or mineral areas by the counties

The existing Regional Growth Strategy focuses growth in jurisdictions that have designated regional growth centers, with a total of 55% of the population growth and 73% of the employment growth going to Metropolitan and Core cities.

Comments from the past few years and during the scoping process highlighted broad interest in specific changes to regional geographies. The issues highlighted in the scoping comments are summarized below, as well as alternatives that were suggested by commenters or have been developed by PSRC staff to address the issues.

**Small and Larger Cities.** Specific concerns involved what many see as an arbitrary distinction between Small and Larger cities based on a threshold of 22,500 population + jobs. In addition, with the potential for cities to “grow out of” the Small Cities geography, the current definition results in a regional map that has changed over time. Eight cities have been reclassified from Small to Larger cities since 2008.

As an alternative, commenters identified a number of additional factors that could be used to differentiate among cities, such as transit service, employment accessibility, annexation/incorporation potential, planned and funded infrastructure, and distance from the contiguous urban growth area boundary.

**Urban Unincorporated.** Commenters raised questions about the role of Unincorporated Urban Areas. Consistent with GMA, VISION 2040 describes cities as the most appropriate providers of urban services and thus focuses more growth within cities. Unincorporated Urban Areas are expected to grow more modestly than cities, while at the same time, counties and cities are urged to plan for transitioning these areas to city
jurisdiction through annexation or incorporation, with a goal of transitioning all areas within the UGA to city jurisdiction by 2040. Currently, the Regional Growth Strategy provides guidance for different growth shares for unincorporated areas in each county based on location and whether those areas are affiliated with cities or planned for incorporation.

As an alternative, some commenters identified several considerations that support a more significant role for Unincorporated Urban Areas within the Regional Growth Strategy. These included encouraging a more detailed view of Urban Unincorporated Areas based on location, density, affiliation status, and planned infrastructure investments—i.e. treat these areas more like cities.

**Role of Transit Investments.** Commenters focused on the role of centers, transit station areas, and transit investments in the regional geographies. Since VISION 2040 was adopted in 2008, significant new transit service has come online or has been authorized by voters. Transit-oriented development has become a major emphasis for planning across the region. Through its commitment to implementing the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, PSRC and many regional partners have identified transit oriented development as a key strategy for accommodating growth, providing housing and mobility options, and building complete livable communities.

Data on transit service, now and in the future, can be used to identify which cities have different levels of access through the regional transit system as a foundation for clustering growth around those investments. PSRC has identified a 2040 Integrated Transit Network using the long-range plans of the region’s transit agencies. Potential TOD locations were also identified using this network and other planning data. Attachment A) shows the current Regional Geographies along with existing and planned high-capacity transit investments. Attachment B provides a more detailed view of the transit investments, including current and future rail stations, BRT stops, and ferry terminals.

**Major Military Installations.** The Regional Centers Framework Update focused on recognition of the four largest military facilities through a new regional geography category.

**Options for Revised Regional Geographies**

At their June meeting, the Growth Management Policy Board reviewed the issues outlined above and expressed interest in the following concepts to explore modifications to the regional geography classification:

- Continue a focus on jurisdictions with designated regional centers
- Differentiate current Small and Larger cities by existing and planned high-capacity transit
  - Includes light rail, bus rapid transit, commuter rail, ferry & streetcar
- Identify unincorporated urban areas with high-quality transit service
- Recognize Major Military Installations

In addition to these items, it was noted that “one size” fits all may not be the best approach for the regional geographies, and that the categories should be more specific, particularly for urban unincorporated areas and areas identified for transit-oriented development. Board members also noted that development of regional geographies should keep consider a jurisdiction’s ability...
Based on these concepts, staff has developed the following option as a starting point for discussing modifications to the regional geography classifications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location &amp; Transit Characteristics</th>
<th>Potential Regional Geographies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Area with Designated Regional Growth Center &amp; High Capacity Transit</td>
<td>Metropolitan Cities Core Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other cities, Potential Annexation Areas &amp; Potential Incorporation Areas with High Capacity Transit</td>
<td>Transit Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Area with no High Capacity Transit</td>
<td>Other Cities (with No High Capacity Transit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Unincorporated Areas (with no High Capacity Transit)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated Rural and Resource Lands</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military installations with more than 5,000 enlisted and service personnel, consistent with the Regional Centers Framework Update.</td>
<td>Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major Military Installations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regional Staff Committee members will be asked for input on this approach. For example, using including transit service as a distinguishing feature for regional geographies could include more nuanced definition, or more detailed factors could be used instead to inform growth shares within each geography. These could include:

- Type of transit mode and quality of service (number of stops, span and frequency, and travel time to regional destinations)
- Infrastructure factors in addition to high capacity transit service

**Growth Scenarios for the Regional Growth Strategy**

VISION 2040’s Regional Growth Strategy was developed from several alternatives – ranging from highly concentrated to more dispersed growth patterns – that were studied through an extensive environmental analysis. The preferred hybrid alternative that emerged from this process represented a deliberate move away from historical trends toward a more sustainable pattern of development that could be achieved within the long-range planning period to 2040.
VISION 2050 will include an extension of the Regional Growth Strategy out another decade beyond 2040 to 2050. This extension is an opportunity to incorporate lessons learned from efforts to date to implement the existing strategy, which may result in changes to the growth strategy and development of a new alternative(s).

Comments during the VISION 2050 scoping process encouraged considering a range of factors in distributing planned 2050 growth throughout the region, including:

- Recent historical growth and development trends, including trends that have supported the RGS and trends that are divergent from the RGS
- Local capacity to accommodate growth, including vested development, zoned land use capacity, and infrastructure capacity
- Levels of transportation accessibility, with a focus on current and future transit connections
- Transit-oriented development, with a focus on opportunities to leverage regional investments in high-capacity transit
- Designated centers, particularly regional growth centers and manufacturing/industrial centers, but also countywide and local centers, with consideration of new regional centers framework
- Jobs-housing balance within counties, other sub-regions, and localities, with a focus on impacts on transportation, economic development, and housing affordability
- Market conditions that indicate current and potential growth potential and challenges

Staff has outlined several preliminary growth concepts as a starting point for discussing modifications to the Regional Growth Strategy.

- **STAY THE COURSE** – This would represent a “no action” alternative as required under SEPA and would continue the VISION 2040 shares of growth in a straight line to 2050. This option would continue to encourage jobs-housing balance between the counties and focus growth in centers, with a significant share being directed to the region’s regionally designated centers.

- **VISION UPDATED BASE AND EXTENDED** – This concept could update the strategy to reflect market trends during the period VISION 2040 was developed, and the approximately eight years during which the local target setting and planning processes took place in each county. With local comprehensive plan updates that are built on VISION 2040 now in place, this option could factor in the growth and market conditions that occurred from 2000 through the present, but maintain the shares of growth for each geography from now to 2050 that was committed to in VISION 2040. Like the VISION EXTENDED option above, this option could continue to encourage jobs-housing balance between the counties and focus growth in centers, with a significant share being directed to the region’s regionally designated centers.

- **VISION + (MORE) TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT** – This concept could incorporate an explicit goal for growth in areas served by high-capacity transit to reflect existing and planned investments in transit.

In this concept, the desired share of the region’s population and job growth in TOD locations could be identified and then further distributed based on the overarching regional geography in which the TOD area is located (i.e. Metro or Core Cities; Other
Cities, Potential Annexation Areas, and Incorporation Areas with High Capacity Transit. The remaining share of population and employment growth not identified for TOD locations could be distributed based on the adopted objectives for the Regional Growth Strategy (i.e. growth is focused within the designated urban growth area and focused in cities, better jobs-housing balance, preservation of rural lands and protection of natural resources).

Committee members will be asked for suggestions and input on the concepts above to help further develop growth scenarios for board consideration this fall.

**Schedule**

Development of the 2050 growth strategy is anticipated to require extensive involvement of the Regional Staff Committee and RSC Co-Chairs and Growth Management Policy Board. Consistent with feedback from the RSC Co-Chairs, the schedule was updated earlier this spring to accelerate alternatives development. The general steps for review of the growth strategy consist of:

**May - July 2018 (including June 7 GMPB extended meeting)**
- Further review current Regional Growth Strategy performance
- Consider definitions for Regional Geographies and potential changes (anticipating consideration of Small, Larger, and Unincorporated Urban geographies)
- Consider objectives for the Regional Growth Strategy and how it supports VISION’s overall set of goals and policies
- Finalize inputs to extend current Regional Growth Strategy extended to 2050 (No Action Alternative)
- Explore concepts for modifying the Regional Growth Strategy
- Identify potential evaluation measures for growth concepts

**August - September 2018 (including Sept 6 GMPB extended meeting)**
- Explore current Regional Growth Strategy extended to 2050
- Continue to explore concepts for modifying the Regional Growth Strategy
- Review early analysis of growth concepts using evaluation measures

**October - November 2018 (Oct 4/Nov 1 GMPB meetings)**
- Identify potential growth strategy alternative(s) to formally analyze as part of SEPA

**Winter 2019**
- Support Draft Supplemental EIS process
- Issue Draft Supplemental EIS
- Review analysis results

**Spring/Summer 2019**
- Develop draft VISION 2050 growth strategy with preferred alternative
- Incorporate growth strategy into draft VISION 2050
- Release draft VISION 2050 for public comment

**Fall 2019**
- GMPB recommendation on draft VISION 2050 and growth strategy
Next Steps

The steps for updating the Regional Growth Strategy are outlined above. In addition, staff will continue to brief the committee on the work of the Growth Management Policy Board.

Lead Staff

Liz Underwood-Bultmann, (206) 464-6174 or LUnderwood-bultmann@psrc.org, Paul Inghram at 206-464-7549, PInghram@psrc.org and Jeff Storrar, 206-587-4817, JStorrar@psrc.org

Attachments:

A – Map: VISION 2040 Regional Geographies
B – Map: Regional High Capacity Transit Network (Existing and Planned)
MEMORANDUM

June 21, 2018

TO: Regional Staff Committee

FROM: Erika Harris, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Regional Open Space Conservation Plan Update

In Brief

Staff will report on the recently completed regional open space conservation plan. The committee is encouraged to share the plan with staff and other partners who work on planning, parks and recreation, trails, hazard mitigation, and natural resources.

Discussion

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry & Communities awarded PSRC a grant to develop a regional open space conservation plan, which will help implement En-Action-2 and MPP-En-8. These provisions in VISION 2040 direct the region to identify, preserve, and enhance significant regional open space networks and linkages across jurisdictional boundaries.

Earlier this year, the Regional Staff Committee, Growth Management Policy Board, open space advisory committee, and other stakeholders provided feedback on the draft plan. This valuable feedback was used to update the plan, and a final plan will be available on PSRC’s open space webpage.

The plan was developed through a data-driven, collaborative process that involved a diverse set of stakeholders. The advisory committee for the plan, made up of representatives from counties, cities, tribes, resource agencies, nonprofits, and working lands businesses, met four times to help guide development of the plan. PSRC staff worked closely with county staff to gather information, develop maps, and solicit feedback. PSRC staff also conducted interviews with over 200 people from nonprofits, resource agencies, tribes, and other stakeholder groups.

The coordinated vision for open space in this plan serves to elevate the region’s conservation needs and is already attracting the attention of potential funders. The strength of the plan and the regional open space network is that they integrate and build on current conservation and planning efforts across sectors, across agencies, and across jurisdictions. The plan is not a regulatory or policy document, nor does it require jurisdictions to take specific actions. Rather, it provides a regional context and shares important information and knowledge that can help jurisdictions in their own conservation efforts. It highlights work that jurisdictions are already doing so that different groups can learn from each other. Perhaps most importantly, the plan provides a platform for working together toward collaborative and regional initiatives that are targeted and scaled to meet the region’s most pressing conservation priorities. The plan:
• Compiles data on open space services from across the region into a geodatabase for planners and conservation groups
• Presents a regional open space network and conservation opportunities within the network that can serve as a guide for open space conservation
• Describes the threats to open space in the region
• Presents strategies, tools, and actions to conserve the region’s key open spaces

At its June 21 meeting, staff will report to the Regional Staff Committee how the plan has been updated and discuss how the plan can be implemented and incorporated into VISION 2050 to best support local conservation efforts.

Next Steps

A link to the plan will be provided to the committee once it has been posted. The committee is encouraged to share the plan with planning, parks and recreation, transportation (particularly trails), hazard mitigation, natural resources, and other staff and partners who work on open space issues. When requested, PSRC can share data from the plan.

Lead Staff

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The Regional Staff Committee meets the third Thursday of each month, 9:30 am, PSRC Board Room, 1011 Western Avenue, 5th Floor. Agendas and supporting materials are available the Thursday prior to the meeting on our website: www.psrc.org. Meetings are subject to change or cancellation based on the agenda. The August meeting is not regularly scheduled.