

# VISION 2050



## Scoping Report

June 2018

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## Introduction

This report summarizes the results of Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) public process to solicit comments on the scope for VISION 2050, the region's upcoming long-range growth management, economic, and transportation strategy.

This report:

- Documents the scoping process
- Summarizes comments received
- Provides highlights from the public opinion survey
- Establishes the scope of environmental review
- Identifies board priorities and key assumptions for the plan update

PSRC is extending the region's growth plan to 2050. VISION 2050 will build on the region's existing plan, VISION 2040, to keep the central Puget Sound region healthy and vibrant as it grows. As the region prepares to add more people and jobs in the coming decades – about 1.8 million more people by 2050 – VISION 2050 will identify the challenges we should tackle together as a region and renew the vision for in the next 30 years.

PSRC is updating VISION to consider new information and perspectives about a changing region. During the scoping period, PSRC sought community input to shape the plan. What important regional issues should we focus on during the update? How should the region's growth strategy be updated to plan for 2050? As we consider different

## Environmental review

PSRC has proposed to update and revise the long-range growth, economic, and transportation strategy for King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. PSRC, as lead agency for environmental review, has determined that the regional plan for 2050 may have significant impact on the environment, and in February 2018 issued a Determination of Significance (DS), pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA — RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c)). In response to the DS, PSRC will analyze impacts to the built and natural environments in a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS). The SEIS will evaluate alternative ways that the region might grow and different strategies to mitigate negative impacts of growth. The SEPA process will follow procedures identified in Chapter 197-11 of the Washington Administrative Code, the SEPA Handbook (2017), PSRC procedures and policies for implementing SEPA adopted in Executive Board Resolution EB-2016-01, and PSRC's Public Participation Plan (2017). PSRC will use the environmental review process to analyze the effects of continued growth in the region, and alternative ways of responding to and accommodating that growth.

ways to grow as a region, what impacts and actions should be evaluated through environmental review?

The exploration was done through a scoping process conducted under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) that was designed to inform the public, interest groups, affected tribes, and government agencies about the project, and to gather comments about the key issues that our all the region's stakeholders feel should be addressed. A scoping notice was issued on February 2, 2018, for a 45-day comment period that concluded March 19, 2018. A wide range of thoughtful comments were offered. PSRC has been challenged to revisit the regional growth strategy, address the interconnectedness of policy issues, and to provide better guidance, measurable objectives and targets to assist the region's counties, cities, towns, agencies and businesses to take steps to make VISION a reality.

### **Scoping notice**

The scoping notice included a Determination of Significance under Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and announced the intent to complete a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). In addition to the scoping notice, PSRC provided information about recent trends and an overview of data related to the Regional Growth Strategy online.

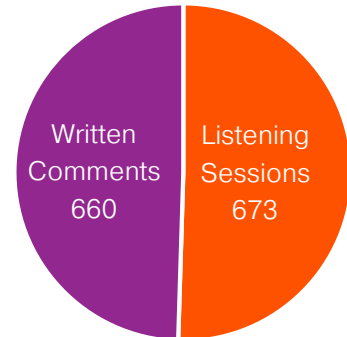
The notice was distributed through multiple methods, including via PSRC website and blog, a press release, and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). The notice was sent to all PSRC boards and committees, and various PSRC members and stakeholders shared the notice through local forums, newsletters, and social media. The notice was also distributed to PSRC's SEPA notification list, which includes

### **What is scoping?**

Scoping is the first step in the environmental review process. The purpose of environmental scoping is to determine the scope and significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the SEIS. The scoping process is also intended to eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not significant, and those that have been covered by prior environmental review. The scoping process for VISION 2050 was held between February 2, 2018, and March 19, 2018. It included events and meetings at which issues were identified and explored. PSRC reviewed selected policy areas of the existing VISION 2040 plan, conducted a public opinion survey, held workshops in each of the four counties, and made presentations to countywide and regional boards and committees. Public involvement and written comments were actively encouraged and solicited throughout the scoping period.

all local governments, state resource agencies, tribes and other interested parties, as required under SEPA. PSRC also sent letters to leadership at all nine federally-recognized tribes in the region to invite their participation with the planning process.

PSRC welcomed comments through multiple methods, including US mail, email, in-person at the March 1, 2018, Growth Management Policy Board meeting, and via fax. Written comments were received via mail, email, and through the PSRC blog.

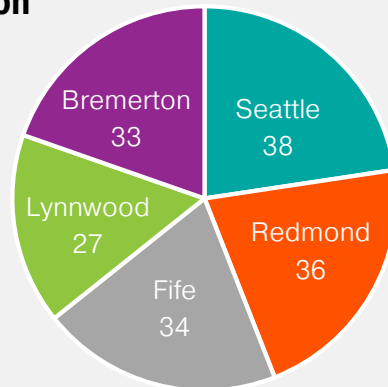


To support the scoping process, PSRC also convened listening sessions in each of the counties to engage with jurisdictional staff and elected officials, other stakeholders, and members of the public on identifying potential issues for the update. Each listening session included break-out discussion groups that addressed land use and the Regional Growth Strategy; transportation and infrastructure; economy; environment and open space; and housing.

More than 160 individuals participated in the listening sessions, and staff recorded comments at the sessions to inform the scoping process. Some participants also filled out written forms at the Listening Sessions, which were also recorded as comments.

### Listening session information and participation

- Seattle | King County | Feb 13, 2018
- Fife | Pierce County | Feb 20, 2018
- Lynnwood | Snohomish County | Feb 22, 2018
- Bremerton | Kitsap County | Feb 27, 2018
- Redmond | King County | Mar 8, 2018



## Summary of comments

During the scoping period, PSRC received comments from three countywide organizations, 24 individual jurisdictions, 23 other organizations and agencies, and 37 individuals. Combined with the listening session comments, staff delineated over 1,300 individual comments to inform the plan scope and SEPA environmental review. This is a comparable number of comments to the initial VISION 2040 scoping.

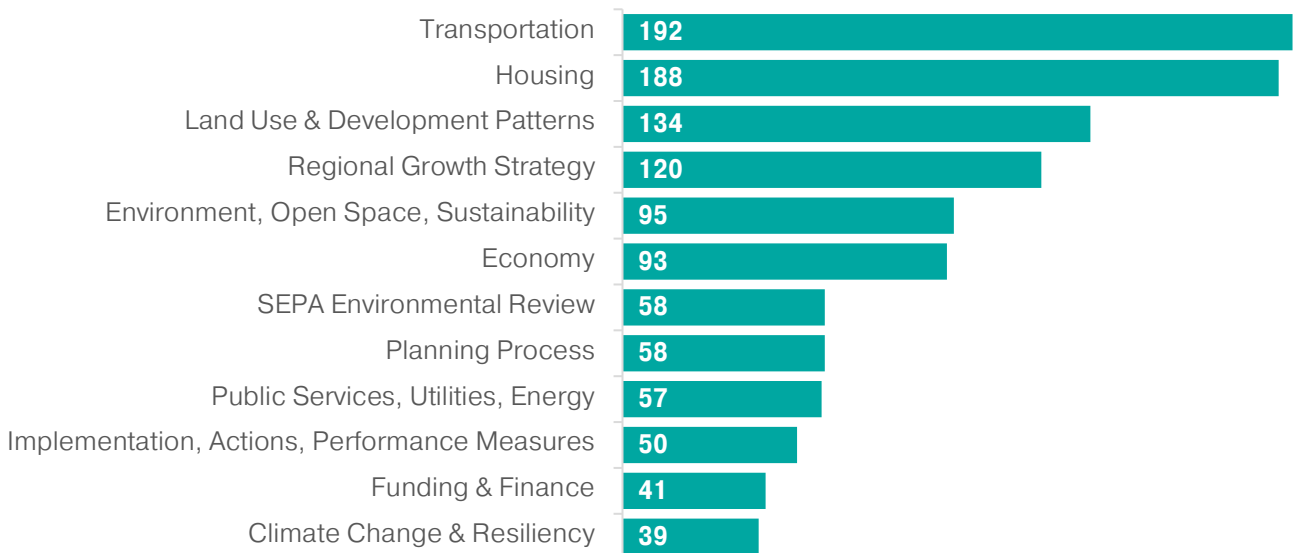
Individual delineated comments were categorized by the primary policy area they addressed. When comments touched on other or related issues, they were also assigned a secondary category. The comment summary table identifies how many times comments were categorized in particular categories.

The following sections outline responses provided in comments to scoping questions:

- What regional issues should the plan address?
- How should the region’s growth strategy be updated to plan for 2050?
- What impacts should be evaluated through environmental review?

The full set of written comments submitted is available on the [VISION webpage](#), along with a [summary of all comments](#) categorized by comment area. This report provides a summary of comment themes – the full set of written comments provides additional context.

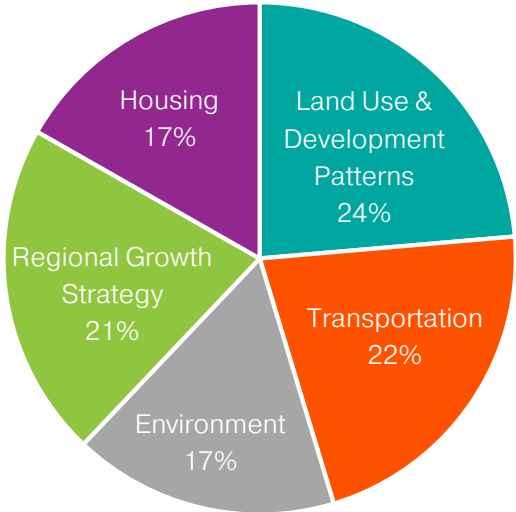
### ***Number of comments by category (all comments):***



**Number of written comments by category:**

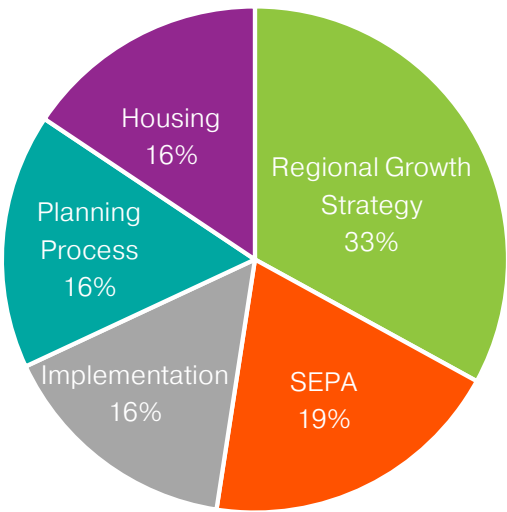


**Top categories for all comments:**



\* Top five categories only.

**Top categories for written comments:**



\* Top five categories only.

## **VISION 2040**

VISION 2040 is the region's current plan for managing growth forecasted through the year 2040. The plan includes overarching goals, an environmental framework, a strategy to sustainably guide growth in the region, and multicounty planning policies. The plan also includes actions at the regional, county, and local level to make the plan a reality. VISION has six chapters addressing the environment, development patterns, housing, the economy, transportation, and public services.

The plan includes goals and policies to:

- Protect and restore the natural environment and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Plan for growth in cities and urban centers, while reducing sprawl
- Improve the balance of jobs and housing across the counties
- Create more vibrant and resilient urban centers
- Support health, well-being, and active living
- Provide affordable housing choices to meet the needs of all residents
- Improve mobility for people and goods
- Maintain and operate the transportation system safely and efficiently
- Encourage a strong, diverse economy
- Provide services like solid waste, energy, and water systems to support the region's growth

VISION 2040's Regional Growth Strategy defines a role for different types of places in accommodating the region's residential and employment growth, and encourages a balance of jobs and housing among the counties. The strategy guides most employment and housing growth to the region's largest cities and urban centers. Other cities and unincorporated urban areas are expected to play a more modest role as locations for new growth. Outside the urban area, rural communities, farms and forests will continue to be a permanent and vital part of the region.

Environmental review for VISION 2040 showed that, compared with a broad range of alternatives, the desired growth pattern would have significant benefits for mobility, air quality, environmental stewardship, and healthy communities.

## **What regional issues should the plan address?**

The PSRC SEPA Official recommends that PSRC's policy boards should continue to work with staff to prioritize and explore these issues further, and incorporate relevant findings into alternatives as they are prepared for environmental analysis. Issues



presented in comments may already be addressed through the existing VISION 2040 plan, which serves as a starting point for development of VISION 2050. While it will not be possible to address each comment individually during the two-year update, scoping comments will be valuable to consider throughout the planning process.

### Scoping comment summaries

Topic summary	# of Primary	# of Secondary
<b>Agriculture and Food</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>
VISION should preserve farmland and support local food production and improve the economic viability of farmland and access to local food through commercial kitchens, processing facilities, and long-term designation of agricultural land.		
<b>Annexation and Incorporation</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>
VISION should recognize the challenges of the annexation process. VISION should encourage changes to state law to make annexation easier and should identify incentives for cities to annex unincorporated areas. Commenters discussed the role of urban unincorporated areas in the Regional Growth Strategy, whether they should be treated equivalent to cities, growth in unincorporated areas should be coupled with their associated city, or the plan should continue to support less growth in unincorporated areas than in cities.		
<b>Centers and Transit-Oriented Development</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>
VISION should support growth and density around high-capacity transit, including light rail stations and ferry terminals. The plan should incorporate the principles and goals of the Growing Transit Communities Strategy. The region needs more transit and more density around transit stations. The plan should support connections between centers and from outside of centers. Manufacturing/industrial centers have different needs than mixed-use centers and the plan should consider additional uses in those centers. The plan should consider military centers, and the role of countywide centers in the Regional Growth Strategy.		
<b>Climate Change and Resiliency</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>22</b>
Climate change is one of the most pressing challenges facing our region. VISION 2050 should identify strategies local governments can adopt to mitigate the effects of climate change, with a focus on sequestering carbon through protecting trees and open space and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting electric vehicles and renewable energy, and promoting green building practices. VISION should include information, policies and actions that help the region be more resilient to climate change impacts, both collectively and for individual		

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
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jurisdictions. In particular, impacts to water resources (quantity and quality), public health, and infrastructure should be addressed, keeping in mind that these impacts may be inequitably distributed. Population increases due to climate migration should be estimated and planned for. Resiliency to other types of disasters should also be addressed by incorporating hazard information and protective strategies.

<b>Coordination</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>34</b>
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There is a need for increased regional coordination in several areas. Coordination could be enhanced to incorporate recent work into VISION, such as the Regional Centers Framework Update and the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, and better synching VISION with other PSRC plans, particularly on timing. Externally, some emphasized areas where PSRC could better coordinate with local governments and with tribes on data, policy and especially implementation of VISION. Commenters also suggested PSRC coordinate with adjacent regional agencies, with state agencies to better align requirements related to managing and planning for growth, and with the Roadmap Project, a state-wide examination of the Growth Management Act.

<b>Data, Forecast, and Technical Issues</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31</b>
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PSRC should use best available data to inform VISION 2050. Several commenters posed questions about the regional macroeconomic forecast of population and job growth to 2050, including rate of growth, distribution of economic growth, incorporation of local factors, capacity to accommodate forecasted growth, and potential impacts of PSRC policies and actions. It was observed that there are limitations of various data sources in accurately portraying conditions in industrial areas.

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>
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The VISION 2050 planning process should capture and anticipate demographic shifts in the region as it grows, especially the projected aging of the population.

<b>Economy</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>36</b>
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The plan should support job creation in central places across the region to leverage existing housing, infrastructure, and transportation investments. The plan should address jobs-housing balance and shared prosperity across the region. Tools, such as workforce development and the provision of affordable office space, can be utilized to support local economies. The update should recognize the important economic activity from industrials lands, military bases, and freight.

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>
Supporting education is key to a thriving economy. The region and local governments should plan for schools in the context of broader growth planning, and VISION should include an update to the multicounty planning policies on school siting per recent state statute.		
<b>Environment, Open Space &amp; Sustainability</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>62</b>
The region should strive towards sustainability to ensure a continued high quality of life as we grow. VISION should reinforce the economic and human health, including mental health, benefits of maintaining a healthy environment and the services that our natural infrastructure provides. VISION 2040 has environmental goals and policies that should continue to be supported and further implemented. The Regional Open Space Conservation Plan should be implemented. This includes equitable access to open space and bringing nature into compact communities to support quality of life in those places. Further emphasis on water quality and restoring the health of Puget Sound and its tributaries and floodplains is needed. Cross-jurisdictional and cross-sector collaboration is necessary to achieve these goals, including strategies to ensure we have capacity to grow in the right places.		
<b>Equity and Social Justice</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>43</b>
Growth should benefit all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, income, age, or ability. The update should define social equity. Assess new and updated policies to see how they will affect residents, specifically lower-income and more vulnerable populations, and develop strategies to mitigate disparities and reduce displacement. The plan should uphold environmental justice principles and promote clean and safe built and natural environments for all residents.		
<b>Funding and Finance</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>63</b>
The plan should acknowledge financial challenges for jurisdictions and the link between growth and tax revenues. Commenters addressed various funding priorities, including funding for housing, infrastructure, such as trails and sewer, and transit service. Several comments stated opposition to funding certain projects, such as Sound Transit 3. Some commented that the plan should link performance and implementation of VISION with funding. The planning process should also consider the distribution of funds by counties and using PSRC-managed funds to spur local economic development.		

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
<b>Healthy Communities</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>
Human health is directly tied to environmental and economic health. A health “lens” should be used when reviewing and updating the plan to ensure health is promoted in all policies. The update should identify health metrics and future implementation work should monitor these metrics, with a focus on lower-income and vulnerable populations. The SEIS should address the public health impacts of transportation and development.		
<b>Housing</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>18</b>
The region needs to expand its housing stock to include a great 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. The update should more explicitly tie housing to transportation, job growth, equity, and health. Some called for a stronger regional approach to address housing supply and affordability while others believe housing is a local issue.		
<b>Housing - Affordability</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>15</b>
Housing affordability crosses jurisdictional boundaries; increased housing costs and the resulting displacement often have a domino effect across the region. A variety of tools and incentives are needed to build and preserve housing affordable at various income thresholds in different housing markets. Affordability includes access to transportation, jobs, and services, not just housing costs. The update should identify and mitigate ways growth will adversely impact housing affordability, specifically in centers and areas with access to transit. PSRC should provide more timely data on housing affordability at regular intervals to provide technical support for local jurisdictions.		
<b>Housing - Displacement</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>
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. The update should acknowledge these unintended consequences and develop policies and strategies to help residents stay in their communities. Any potential updates to the Regional Growth Strategy should assess future displacement risk.		

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
<b>Housing - Homelessness</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>
The update should address homelessness. Affordable housing, medical care, and social services are needed to address the growing number of people experiencing homelessness. Market driven housing solutions often do not provide the level of affordability needed to keep people from becoming homeless.		
<b>Implementation, Actions and Performance Monitoring</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>81</b>
Provide more information about the performance of VISION 2040 and include performance measures in VISION 2050. Measures related to social equity outcomes should be included. Some sought greater clarity on what VISION 2050 might require of cities and counties. There was also interest in financial assistance and incentives to support local implementation.		
<b>Land Use and Development Patterns</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>81</b>
There were a wide variety of comments about land uses, densities and their geographic distribution in the region. VISION should continue to support complete, walkable neighborhoods with a quality built environment. There was support for the VISION 2040 Land Use goal, along with questions about how land uses are balanced across the region and how they impact housing affordability. The region should maintain the urban growth boundary and preserve farms and rural and natural areas. Some suggested that VISION 2050 needs to look at the availability of commercial and industrial lands. Several asked about land capacity and other methods of measuring the region's ability to accommodate growth.		
<b>Land Use and Development Patterns - Concurrency</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>
Emphasize concurrency. It is important to align land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to ensure that growth is well served.		
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>
Comments include a desire for defining terms used in the planning document, opinions on local policies, and support for other letters submitted.		
<b>Planning Process</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>35</b>
The scope of work for VISION 2050 should ensure that the plan can be adopted by the critical deadline of spring 2020. An assessment of the outcomes of VISION 2040 should be evaluated to determine if VISION 2050 should build off these successes or an entire reexamination of the plan needs to take place. The plan should demonstrate		

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
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the connection between policy areas by reorganizing and consolidating sections. The planning process should engage businesses and historically underrepresented communities to represent those most impacted by planned actions. Making the plan more simplified and including a concise vision statement, could more effectively convey anticipated benefits and impacts of the proposed actions. The planning process should improve coordination between PSRC plans and boards and state planning processes.

<b>Public Services, Utilities and Energy</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>37</b>
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The public services goals and policies to encourage development with adequate public facilities and services should be further implemented with an emphasis on environmental and financial sustainability and resiliency. The region would benefit from more coordination and communication between service providers and between service providers and jurisdictions. Planning for our future water supply is particularly important given climate impacts and strong growth. More attention is needed to maintaining current public services such as water, sewer, stormwater and transportation. To support the health of Puget Sound, decreasing pollution delivered by sewer, septic, stormwater, and transportation systems should be addressed. VISION should support the financing of infrastructure other than transportation and consider emerging technology and equitable access to broadband.

<b>Regional Growth Strategy</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>32</b>
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Per one of the scoping questions, commenters offered many comments on how the Regional Growth Strategy should be updated. Those comments are summarized on page 17.

<b>SEPA Environmental Review</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>24</b>
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The SEIS should update existing conditions to reflect the current conditions for issues such as transportation, housing affordability, and ecosystems and include short and long-term mitigation for impacts.

The SEIS should analyze direct, indirect, and cumulative effects (both positive and negative) of the plan for the follow topics related to the built environment: land use, transportation (including vehicle miles traveled, airports, freight, transit, non-motorized/walkability/choices, concurrency), energy infrastructure and transport, water and wastewater infrastructure, housing (including affordability and displacement), emergency services, schools, and parks.

Topic summary	# of Primary	# of Secondary
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The SEIS should analyze direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the plan for the following topics related to the natural environment: air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions), water quality and ecosystems (including open space, tree canopy, surface and ground water supply, floodplains, estuaries, shorelines, wetlands, streams, riparian areas, ocean acidification, endangered species, and tribal treaty rights).

The SEIS should analyze direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the plan for the following topics related to the social environment: Environmental justice (toxic waste sites, air quality, water quality, affordable housing, access to transportation, access to open space) and public health (including recreational opportunities, access to healthy food, social opportunities). Use the Guide to Integrating Health into SEPA Review to consider health.

Consider the following issues when analyzing cumulative effects: climate impacts (sea level rise, increased storm events during the winter, less precipitation during the summer) and autonomous vehicles.

Based on comments and additional review, the scope of the SEPA review is outlined starting on page 18.

Transportation	123	38
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The region needs to maintain emphasis on developing a multi-modal transportation system that serves both people and freight. At a high-level, VISION 2050's transportation goals/policies should address equity, provide transportation choices to users, address resiliency and adaptation, focus on accessibility, ensure mobility for different users and subareas, and support the Regional Growth Strategy.

PSRC should continue efforts to integrate land use and transportation planning. There needs to be recognition of the relationship between jobs, housing and the transportation system and VISION 2050 needs to focus on planning for a better balance. It is also important to understand the impacts of transportation decisions. Specifically called out are considerations of the environmental impacts of the transportation system in terms of pollution, waste and greenhouse gases.

In terms of specific modes, commenters suggested PSRC continue focusing on the bicycle and pedestrian networks and ensuring safety/security for all users. Ensuring freight mobility is critical and commenters provided suggestions for enhancements to PSRC's freight data and planning efforts and recommended better coordination with regards to managing freight. The aviation system should be integrated into the regional

<b>Topic summary</b>	<b># of Primary</b>	<b># of Secondary</b>
transportation system and VISION 2050 needs to incorporate the findings from the Regional Aviation Baseline Study.		
<b>Transportation - Preservation</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
Need to maintain and preserve existing assets and this needs to be reflected in VISION 2050's transportation goals.		
<b>Transportation - Technology</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>
VISION 2050 should address/evaluate emerging transportation technologies and account for anticipated impacts of these technologies on various aspects. These include understanding the impacts on growth, housing, travel demand, roadway capacity, safety, infrastructure design, land use, regional mobility, and transportation planning practices. PSRC should consider scenario based analyses to analyze emerging technologies and commenters also noted that it is essential to understand the impacts of emerging technologies on the movement of both people and freight.  The electrification of the vehicle fleet needs to be called out in VISION 2050 along with an understanding of the associated impacts such as impacts on the electric grid, need for battery storage/disposal, incentives for low income buyers, etc. VISION 2050 also needs to include a plan for installing sufficient charging stations in support of electrification/climate change goals.		
<b>Transportation - Transit</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>
Focus growth around existing and planned transit investments. Build on and improve the transit system in a way that supports the Regional Growth Strategy. Improve access to transit for all modes. PSRC should also consider public transportation broadly to include various types of rural, special needs, and employer-based, and other flexible public transportation modes. In addition, people with special transportation need and others traditionally disadvantaged or disproportionately impacted groups should be included in planning for growth and public transportation, particularly around issues of displacement near transit stations.		
<b>Urban Design</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>
The plan should recognize and reflect the unique characteristics of communities across the region. In accommodating growth, places will need to be attractive for people to live and walkable to provide equitable access to amenities.		



Topic summary	# of Primary	# of Secondary
Urban Growth Areas	16	10

Maintain a stable urban growth boundary and focus growth within existing urban growth areas by using available lands. Other commenters stated the plan should consider urban growth area swaps or evaluate the need to expand the urban growth area to accommodate forecasted growth.

## How should the region’s growth strategy be updated to plan for 2050?

Numerous commenters addressed the Regional Growth Strategy in several areas: Factors to consider in updating the strategy, revisions to the Regional Geographies definitions, and implementation.

Many different factors and preferences were expressed regarding the development of a geographically specific strategy for accommodating housing and jobs out to 2050. Commenters supported continuation of the existing strategy, including focusing growth within a stable urban growth area, in particular within cities and centers, improving jobs-housing balance, and planning for small cities, especially at the urban fringe, to stay small. Concentrated growth in urban areas was seen as making efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure, including transit, providing housing choices near job centers, and protecting environmentally sensitive areas and rural and resource lands.

Other commenters urged consideration of new or revised strategies. Some favored reconsideration of the role of urban unincorporated areas, citing the important role of these areas in developing at urban densities under the Growth Management Act, as future cities through annexation or incorporation, and as locations where high capacity transit investments are happening. Some favored a more flexible and robust role for small cities, again citing the role that all cities have as urban areas under the Growth Management Act, but also need for growth and investment to help smaller communities be economically and fiscally sustainable. Many commented on the need to incorporate a broader range of recent historical and geographically specific data on growth trends (and how they reflect or diverge from the existing Regional Growth Strategy), zoned development capacity, information derived from Buildable Lands, development in the pipeline, infrastructure investments, market factors, and environmental constraints on development.

Others want to see the Regional Growth Strategy promote more equitable economic growth and jobs across the region. Transit-oriented development was a prominent theme in many comments that stressed the importance of focusing future development around regional high-capacity transit investments, with a common thread of wanting to see a growth alternative that strongly focuses on transit-oriented development.

Several comments addressed desired future growth in specific places, recommending, for example, higher growth in transit station areas and corridors in and around Seattle, higher growth in unincorporated urban areas of Snohomish County, higher (and, in other comments, lower) growth shares for unincorporated urban Pierce County, and less growth in Everett and south King County.

Commenters also addressed the geographic framework and time period of the Regional Growth Strategy. Most prominently, many commenters asked for a reconsideration of how Regional Geographies are defined in VISION 2050. Most focused on the distinction between Small and Larger cities, stating the current definitions based on existing population and jobs alone are arbitrary and have potential for inconsistency over time as cities grow. These commenters urged PSRC to explore other factors to differentiate places, such as proximity to job centers, annexation potential, planned and funded infrastructure, and distance from urban growth area boundary.

Several commenters asked that major military installations be included as Regional Geographies.

Other comments addressed new concepts, such as setting growth expectations for small areas within jurisdictions and providing guidance on future growth for intervening years prior to 2050 to reflect timing of infrastructure investments and market trends.

With regard to implementation, some commenters want to see greater accountability for jurisdictions to plan for and achieve their growth targets. Others would like to see VISION 2050 be less prescriptive. The Regional Growth Strategy, in this view, should focus on providing guidance for local target setting, emphasize local flexibility, and strive to shape future development through incentives.

## **Environmental review**

PSRC's SEPA Official reviewed the VISION 2050 SEPA scoping comments and identified the following areas for discussion in the SEIS, for which significant adverse environmental impacts may occur: land use, population, employment and housing, transportation, air quality (including greenhouse gases), ecosystems, water quality and

hydrology, public services and utilities, parks and recreation, energy, and environmental health. Environmental justice/social equity will also be discussed and analyzed. The SEIS will make updates to other elements as needed to reflect new information. Analysis of environmental impacts will be limited to a scale that is appropriate for long-range, regional planning.

One purpose of this scoping process was to gain information so that PSRC can craft a limited range of alternatives for analysis within the Draft SEIS. The existing Regional Growth Strategy will be considered in the context of recent and projected trends, adopted plans, infrastructure investments, and broad goals for the region, informed by comments submitted during the scoping process. The wide range of alternatives studied for the VISION 2040 EIS provides a robust starting point for this process. Within the range of alternatives previously studied, several options may be available to modify the existing Regional Growth Strategy to more effectively achieve the region's sustainability goals. The alternatives that will be developed will use the same assumptions and forecasts for growth through the year 2050.

**No action alternative.** A “no action” alternative must be evaluated in accordance with SEPA. In this proposal, the no-action alternative will be defined as continuing forward with the adopted growth patterns in VISION 2040, to essentially “stay the course.” The existing Regional Growth Strategy would be extended to reflect forecasts for 2050 without amendment or revision to growth shares or regional geographies.

**2050 modified regional growth strategy alternative(s).** A modified 2050 growth strategy(ies) will be developed that may be defined and evaluated with modified regional geographies, adjusted growth allocations among counties and regional geographies, and/or actions to promote the desired pattern of future population and jobs.

## **Public opinion survey**

In addition to soliciting input through a public comment period, PSRC fielded a public opinion survey in March 2018 to better understand residents' attitudes and opinions about growth and growth-related issues to help inform VISION 2050. The survey provides scientifically-valid responses that reflect the diversity of opinions in the central Puget Sound region, with enough responses to measure opinion of population subsets. Two-thousand residents ages 18 and older were surveyed using online panels, landlines and cell phone samples. The survey was translated in multiple languages and results are weighted to reflect regional demographics.

## Key findings

- Quality of life in the region is seen as positive.
- Affordability, homelessness and traffic are seen as detractors of growth.
- Change and growth is equally seen as positive and negative for residents.
  - Residents who are older, have lived in this region for a longer time period are more negative about growth.
  - Residents who moved here more recently and are younger are more positive about the region and the future.
- Preserving the natural environment and increasing housing choices is seen as important for the region.
- Developing a shared growth strategy is seen as important by many.
- Locating housing near transit is viewed as a key affordability strategy.

A [complete summary of the survey](#) is available online and can help support ongoing board discussion about the update.

## Priority topics

The Growth Management Policy Board will serve as the lead policy board during the VISION 2050 planning process. The board has had several discussions about the plan update to date. There are several fundamental issues that will be addressed through the plan update, including:

- Extending the plan horizon to the year 2050
- Policy updates per statutory changes, including school siting
- Updating outdated information
- Include information from recent regional plans, including:
  - Regional Open Space Conservation Plan
  - Regional Transportation Plan
  - Regional Economic Strategy
  - Updates to address board commitments, including implementation of the Regional Centers Framework Update

The Growth Management Policy Board also identified a select set of priority policy issues to be addressed as part of the VISION 2050 update process. Selection of these issues was based on input received during scoping and discussions among members of both the Growth Management Policy Board and Executive Board.

Board members recognized the most important component of the update is to extend the Regional Growth Strategy to 2050 and make any necessary changes:

- **Regional Growth Strategy**, including land use and development patterns and transit-oriented development. Extending the Regional Growth Strategy to 2050 is a foundational part of this update, and the Growth Management Policy Board will dedicate several meetings to understanding performance of the growth strategy, developing alternatives for environmental review, and identifying a preferred alternative that may include changes to geographies and allocations from the current growth strategy.

The board identified other policy issues that will require significant research, board time, and staff time to review and incorporate into VISION 2050. Research and support for these priority issues will include background papers, extended board discussions, and other outreach and discussion with stakeholders. Priority policy topics are:

- **Housing**, particularly focused on affordability, is seen as the region's most pressing policy issue. PSRC will develop a new research paper and the Growth Management Policy Board will review policies and actions in VISION to identify how to better address housing choice and affordability in the region.
- **Climate change/resiliency** is identified in VISION 2040, but there is a significant amount of new information on the topic since VISION 2040 was adopted, including an appendix prepared for the recent Regional Transportation Plan. VISION 2050 is an opportunity to look at new actions and strategies to further this regional objective.
- **Social equity**, displacement, and suburbanization of poverty. Decisions about growth and community development represent a crucial opportunity to address equitable access to housing, services, transit, and employment. PSRC will develop a new briefing paper, updated analysis, and will work with a consultant on engagement and equity strategies. The Growth Management Policy board will consider strategies and policies to address social equity and access to opportunity.

The Growth Management Policy Board recognizes that VISION is a regional plan and growth strategy where topics are often interrelated, requiring an **integrated approach**. The board identified that a significant element of the update needs to focus on **implementation** of the plan, including regional actions and how to support countywide and local efforts.

Other issues will also be addressed, but may require less research and review time. Issues like the integrated relationships between housing, transportation and jobs, and plan implementation cut across these issue areas and will be addressed through these issues and throughout the planning process. Issues identified by board members include the impact of **transportation technology, community health, annexation, environment and open space, and recognition of Native American tribes**. In context of the time constraints of the update, PSRC staff will continue to work with the Regional Staff Committee and Growth Management Policy Board on development of a work plan to manage time and sequencing of issues during the update.

Since VISION 2040 was adopted in 2008, housing planning and implementation has advanced through the ongoing work of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations. These efforts have yielded new tools and resources, promoted best practices, established community-based housing strategies, and coordinated efforts across multiple jurisdictions. Examples of significant housing initiatives, resources, reports, and policy changes are described below.

## **What assumptions will guide the update?**

Based on previous review, board and committee discussion, and comments received, the following assumptions will guide the VISION 2050 update:

- **Plan for 2050.** A new regional forecast shows expected employment and population through 2050. PSRC is planning for 1.8 million more people and 1.2 million jobs by 2050. Planning for 2050 to inform regional and local planning is a fundamental component of the update.
- **Implement the Growth Management Act.** VISION 2050 will continue to further the Growth Management Act's objectives of preventing sprawl; conserving farmlands, forests, and open spaces; supporting more compact, people-oriented communities; focusing a significant amount of new employment and housing into vibrant urban centers; and coordinating between local governments. PSRC plans under the GMA, and the multicounty planning policies in VISION are required under the Act. Multiple comments reinforced fundamentals of the supporting the Act.
- **Use VISION 2040 as starting point.** PSRC will build on VISION 2040's current framework – goals, policies, and Regional Growth Strategy – as the starting point for developing VISION 2050. Multiple comments reiterated the known

scheduled challenges of the update and the need to complete the plan by 2020. While some encouraged a broader review of the plan, comments generally addressed ways select policies and implementation of VISION could be improved during the update.

- **Focus on emerging and important issues.** To efficiently use public resources and time, the plan update will focus on a limited set of issues that may benefit from additional regional discussion, coordination, and planning. The Growth Management Policy Board identified focus areas of the Regional Growth Strategy, housing, climate change, and social equity as critical policy issues for the board to explore in the update.
- **Reflect the diversity of the region.** The plan update will seek to reflect the demographic, cultural, geographic, and economic diversity of the region. Multiple comments affirmed interest in addressing regional differences and reflecting the diverse populations, perspectives, and places in the region.
- **Review trends and actions.** Key data trends will inform the update, as well as progress towards implementing the actions contained in VISION 2040. The update will identify actions and roles to realize the goals of VISION 2050 and outcome measures from which to measure progress. Commenters encouraged PSRC to use the best available data to complete the update and focus on how the plan can be implemented over time.
- **Integrate recent initiatives.** The update will consider recent initiatives of PSRC and partners, such as recent local comprehensive plan updates, the Growing Transit Communities Strategy, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency climate change targets, the Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, and the Regional Centers Framework Update. Several commenters encouraged incorporating this work and others into the update.
- **Acknowledge and leverage major regional investments.** Since VISION 2040 was adopted, voters have approved two Sound Transit ballot measures to expand high-capacity transit. Other regional transit agencies have expanded service, local governments have built key projects, and the state adopted Connecting Washington to fund major transportation projects. The update will address the impact of these investments on regional policies and strategies. Agencies

commented they were interested in assisting with additional discussion of how to capture major regional investments.

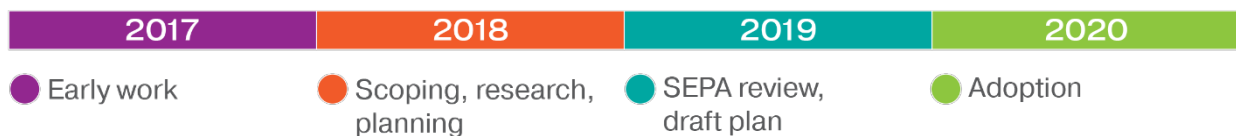
- **Update the document.** PSRC will review the existing plan for out-of-date information or statutory changes since the 2008 adoption of VISION 2040. PSRC will also look for opportunities to make VISION 2050 more accessible and usable.

## Schedule

While the Growth Management Policy Board is the lead policy board for development of the plan, all PSRC's boards, including the Executive Board, will hear updates during the planning process and will have opportunities to discuss and shape the plan. Joint board meetings may be scheduled to address cross-cutting issues with the Transportation Policy Board or Economic Development Board. The Regional Staff Committee will provide assistance reviewing and developing materials for the Growth Management Policy Board. Other advisory committees may be consulted as appropriate, depending on the topic, and other outreach will proceed consistent with the VISION 2050 Engagement Plan.

There will be many opportunities to provide input throughout the planning process, including PSRC meetings, workshops, surveys, online open houses, and opportunities to comment on the draft plan and environmental review document.

### VISION 2050 Work Program



- Analysis of issues, development of the plan, and consideration of changes to the growth strategy will occur through 2018 and in early 2019.
- A draft VISION 2050 plan is scheduled to be released for public review in the summer of 2019.
- Adoption of VISION 2050 by the General Assembly is scheduled to occur at the General Assembly meeting in the spring of 2019.



## Reference

- [VISION 2050 Scoping Comments by Category](#)
- Written Comments from [Jurisdictions](#); [Countywide Groups, Agencies & Organizations](#); and [Individuals](#)
- [Listening Session summaries and written comments submitted at Listening Sessions](#)