



DRAFT DOCUMENTS BRIEFING

Climate Pierce County

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PLANNING OUR TOMORROW
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE ►►►

Comprehensive Plan Overview

Developing a framework to guide the County's day-to-day decisions.

The Comprehensive Plan is our community's vision for the next 20 years. It guides policies and actions related to:



Environment & Climate

- Preserve our natural resources.
- Protect people from natural hazards.
- Climate change adaptation, resiliency, and mitigation policies.



Housing and Land Use

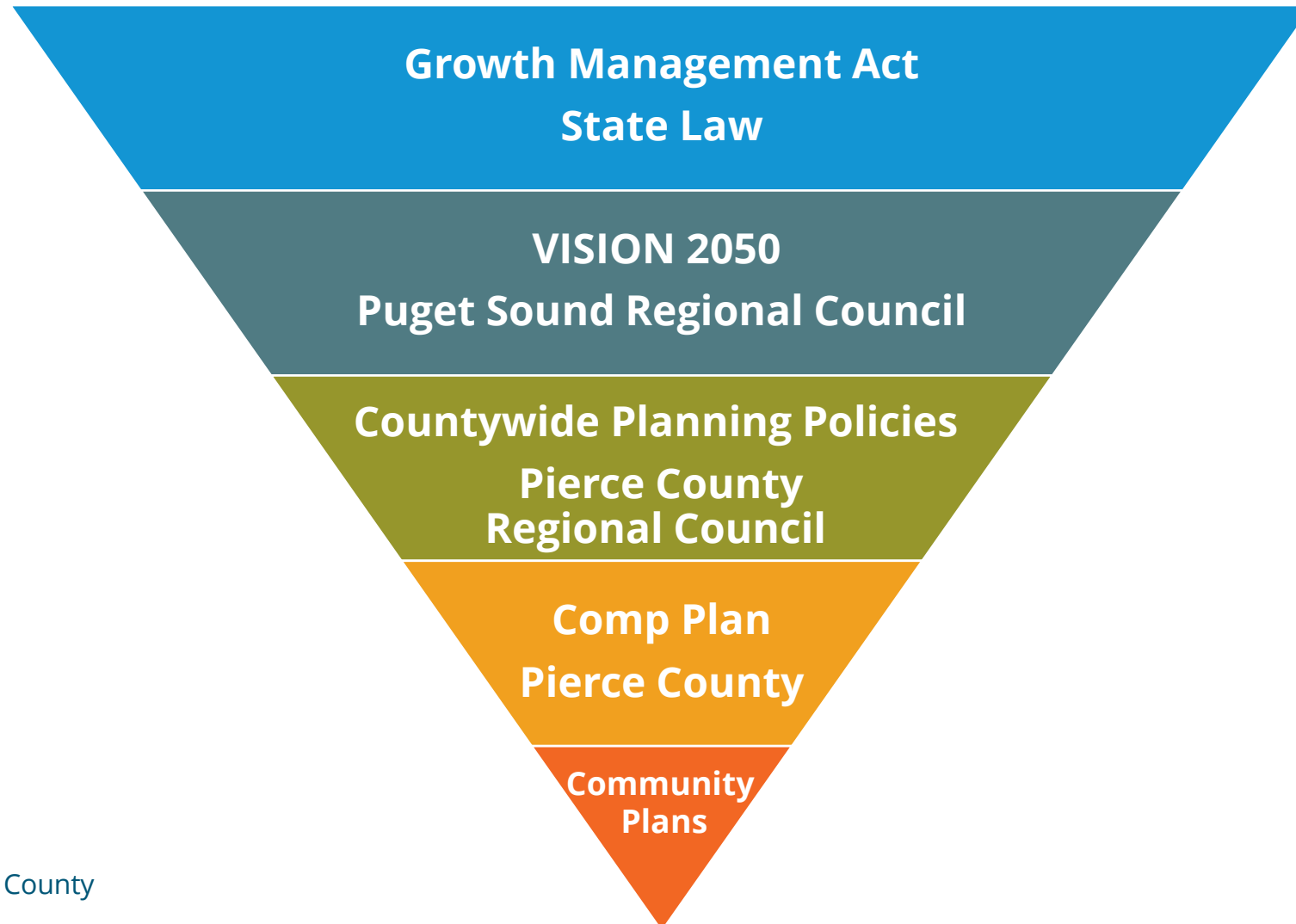
- Plan for affordable, mid-sized, and emergency housing.
- Plan for employment and services for 20-year growth.
- Preserve open space and rural areas.



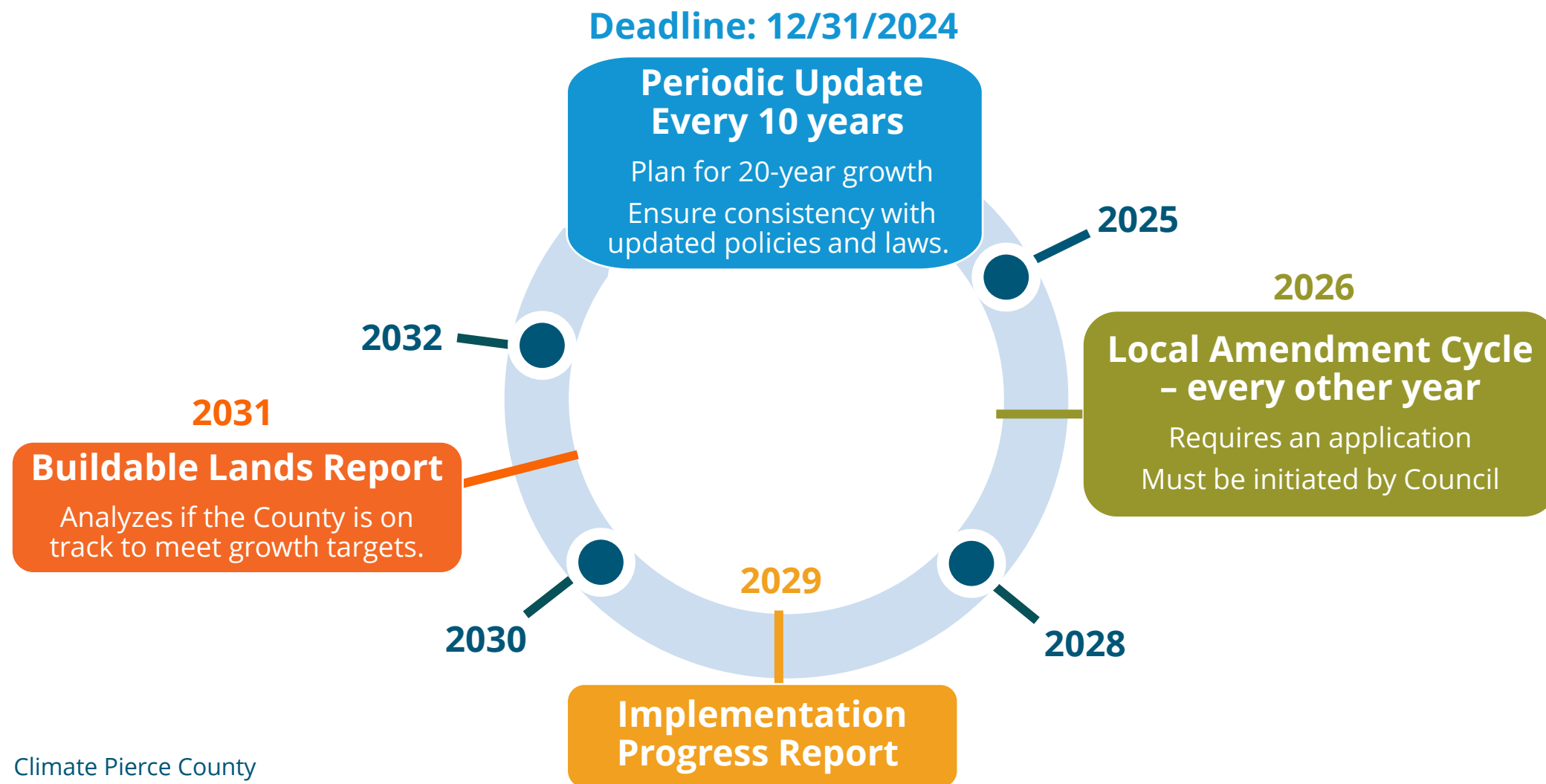
Capital Facilities and Transportation

- Plan for transportation infrastructure services to serve growth.
- Expand opportunities to walk, bike, or take transit.

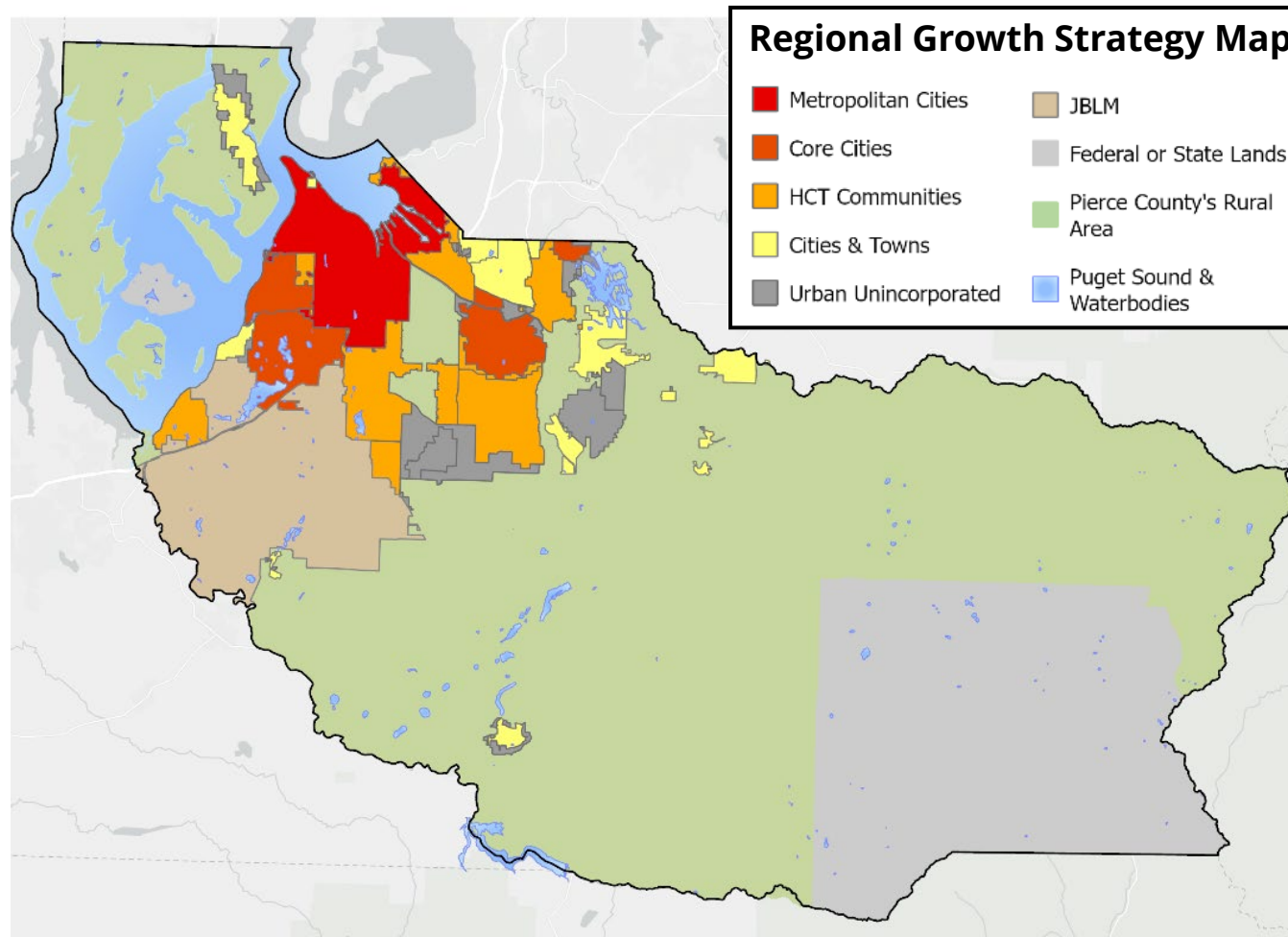
Levels of Planning



Changes to the Comprehensive Plan



2022-2044 Growth Targets



Projected growth, Unincorporated Pierce County:

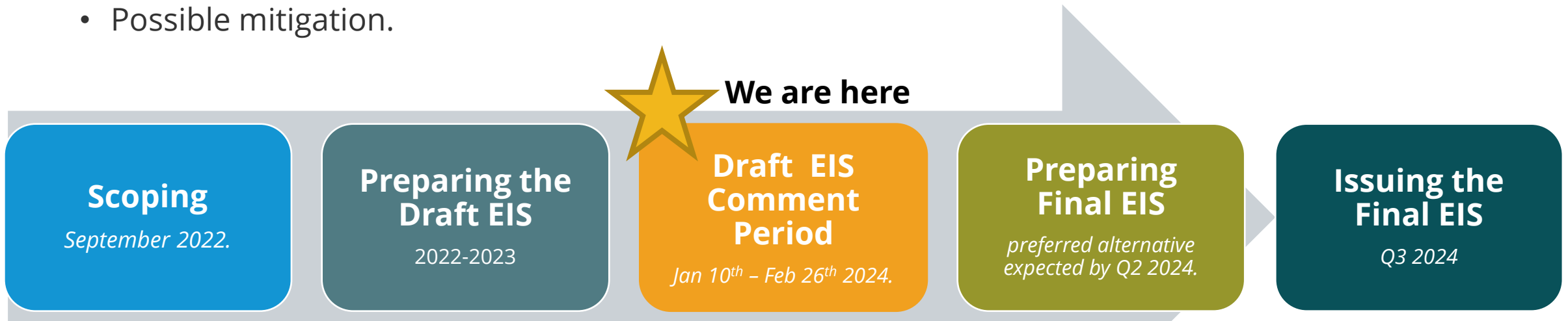
<i>Regional Geographies</i>	<i>Persons¹</i>	<i>Housing²</i>	<i>Jobs¹</i>
High-Capacity Transit	39,205	13,380	10,445
Urban Unincorporated	32,066	10,870	8,850
Pierce County's Rural Area	7,944	2,605	2,950
Unincorporated Pierce Total	79,215	26,855	22,245
Pierce County Total	275,668	107,821	141,379

1. Persons and jobs target adopted through [Pierce County Council Ordinance 2022-46s](#)
2. Housing target adopted through [Ordinance 2023-22s](#)

Environmental Impact Statement

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared when a proposal is likely to have significant adverse environmental impacts. The EIS process analyzes:

- Probable adverse environmental impacts.
- A minimum of three reasonable alternatives, including a “No Action” or business as usual scenario.
- Possible mitigation.



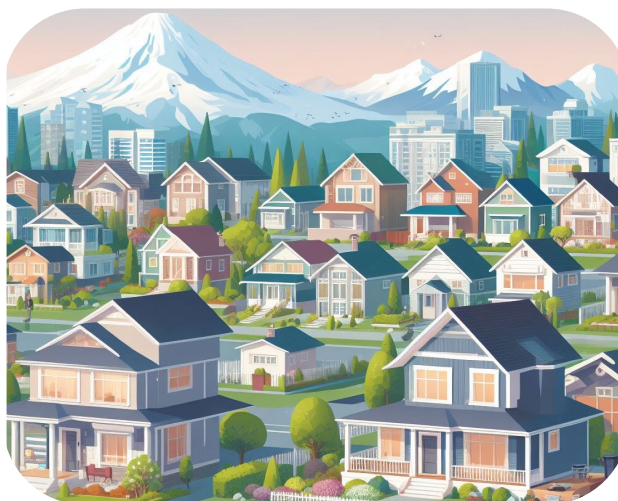
Alternative Summary

1. No Action



Growth without making changes to the County's policies.

2. Centers & Corridors



Builds on existing planning initiatives to encourage growth in urban areas, in line with regional objectives.

3. High-Capacity Transit



Rapidly shifts growth to high-density, multi-modal neighborhoods near transit and limits capacity elsewhere.



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Environment and Climate

Benefits and Tradeoffs between Alternatives

Environment and Climate

Proposed Changes in all alternatives



Environment + Climate Change

Protect communities from climate hazards.
Protect water quality & quantity.
Recognize tribes as co-managers of natural resources.



Open Space

Improve access to open space.
Improve consistency with other County Plans.
Open space as a tool for climate resilience.



Critical Areas

Increase environmental protections based on science.
Clarify exemptions & required mitigation.
Ensure that local regulations follow state & national laws.



Cultural Resources

Clarify coordination with tribes.
Recognize the value and sensitivity of tribal cultural sites.
Protect sites from climate change.

Air Quality + Emissions

Differences between alternatives = Adverse impact identified



1. No Action



County will not meet emissions reduction goal.



2. Centers & Corridors

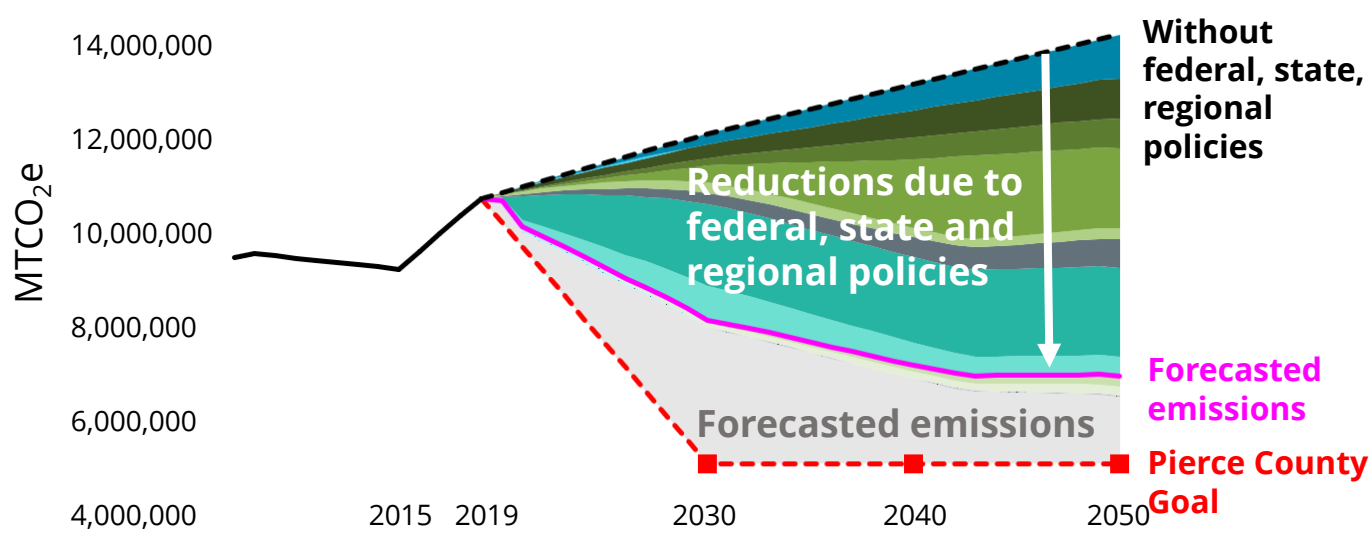
50,000 acres of land conserved for carbon sequestration



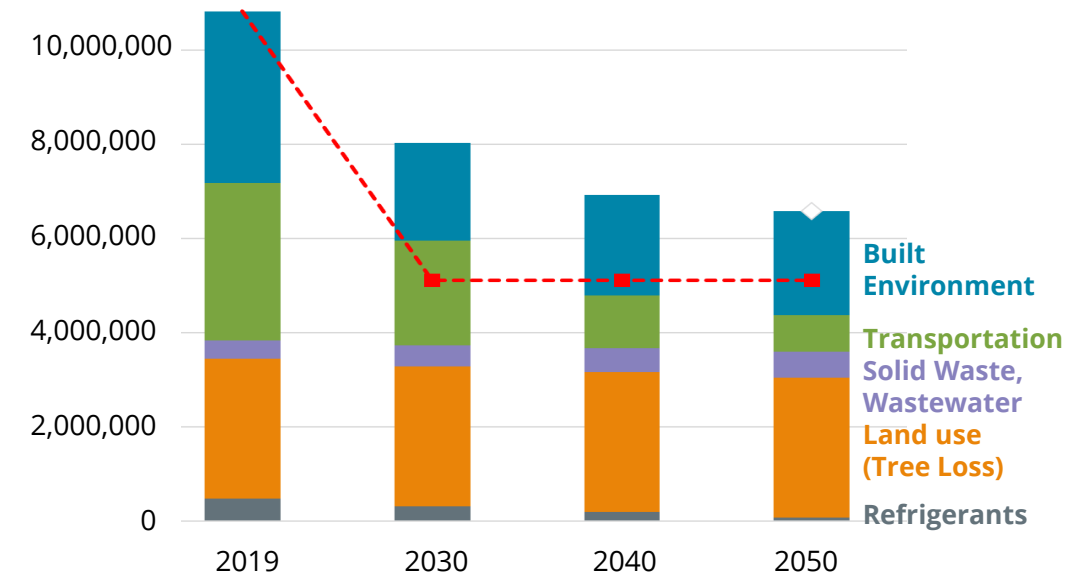
3. High-Capacity Transit

150,000 acres of land conserved for carbon sequestration. 40% urban tree canopy goal.

Graph of Forecasted Emissions reductions – No Action



Forecasted Emissions by Sector – No Action



Air Quality + Emissions

EIS Analysis

❗ = Adverse impact identified

1. No Action

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) will continue to increase.
- ❗ County will not meet emissions reduction goal.
- Existing Inequities remain.



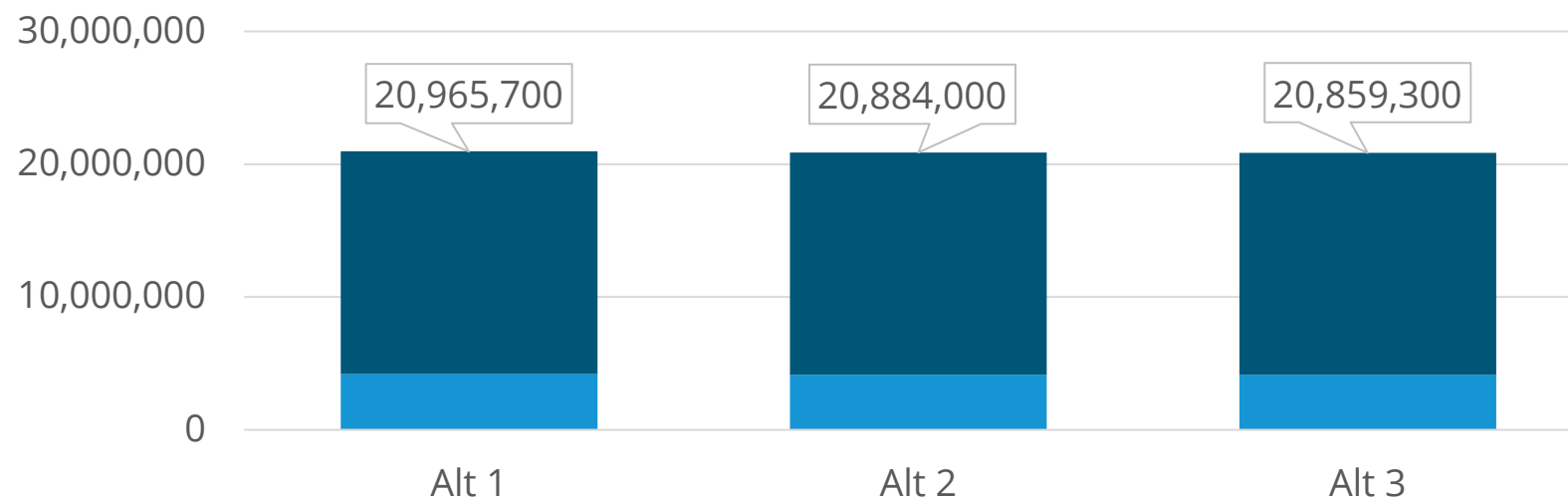
2. Centers & Corridors

- 3,500 MTCO₂e (metric tons of CO₂ equivalent) reduction in transportation emissions due to a decrease in VMT.
- ❗ Growth near heavily trafficked roadways increases exposure to air pollution.



3. High-Capacity Transit

- 4,636 MTCO₂e reduction in transportation emissions due to a decrease in VMT.
- ❗ Growth near heavily trafficked roadways increases exposure to air pollution.

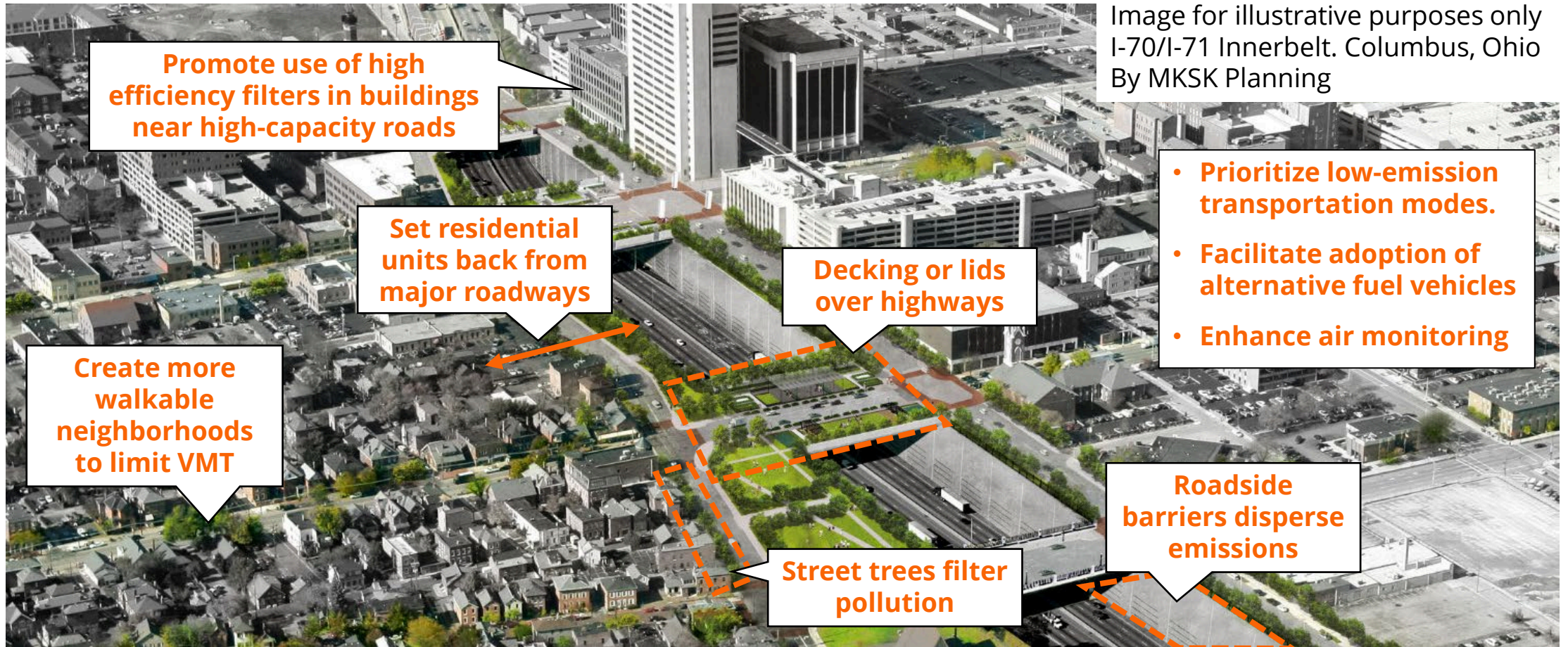


Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by Alternative

- County Roads
- State/ Federal Roads

Reducing exposure to air pollutants

Potential mitigation measures



Cultural Resources

EIS Analysis

❗ = Adverse impact identified
☑ = Impacts addressed with mitigation

ALL Alternatives

Development increases risk of damage to historic district and indigenous cultural resources.

❗ Without a cultural resources review, there is a high likelihood these will be damaged.



2. Centers & Corridors

Expanding SEPA infill exemption decreases projects which receive cultural resources review.

☑ County could establish cultural resource review procedures for SEPA exempt projects.



3. High-Capacity Transit

SEPA infill exemption in HCT only, smaller decrease in projects which receive cultural resources review.

☑ County could establish cultural resource review procedures for SEPA exempt projects.

*Beached canoes and encampment in Seattle, c. 1910.
Image downloaded from Muckleshoot Indian Tribe*





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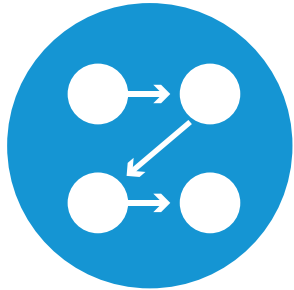
Critical Areas Ordinances (CAO)

Alternatives 2 and 3 include the CAO update.

Alternative 1 explores forgoing the required CAO update.

Critical Areas Ordinances

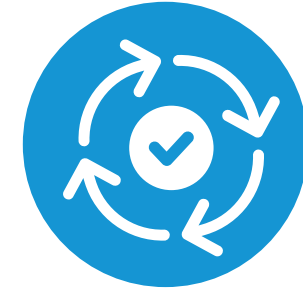
Proposed Changes – General Changes



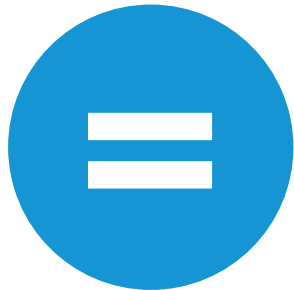
**Require Mitigation Sequencing
for all Critical Area types**



**Clarify Exemptions and
waivers**



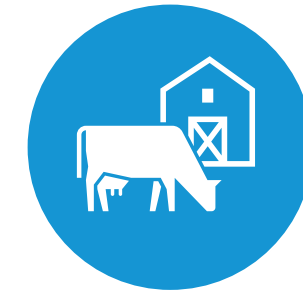
Improve Consistency



Require no net loss



**Update County mapping
sources**



**Clarify regulations for new and
existing agricultural activities**

Critical Areas Ordinances

Proposed Changes – Wetlands



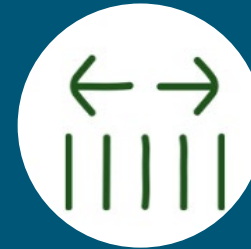
Apply Ecology's Wetland Rating System which will increase buffers and mitigation ratios.



Prohibit single-Family homes in wetland buffers unless mitigated.



Updates for clarity and consistency.



Update allowed activities in Wetlands and buffers.



Allow additional options for mitigation banking, off-site mitigation, and fee-in-lieu programs.

Critical Areas Ordinances

Proposed Changes – Fish and Wildlife Habitat



Revise regulations to reflect the de-listing of the Bald Eagle.



Clarify protections for priority habitat and species, and when habitat assessments would be required.



Update definitions consistent with state law.



Revise protections for existing riparian functions and values using WDFW guidance on site potential tree height.



Update stream typing system consistent with WA Department of Natural Resources procedures

Critical Areas Ordinances

Proposed Changes – Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas



**Identify prohibited
uses.**



**Update wellhead
protection area
definition for
consistency**

Critical Areas Ordinances

Proposed Changes – Geologically Hazardous Areas



Clarify geologic assessments are valid for up to five years.



Recognize sources of landslide hazards.



Update erosion hazard area definition for consistency.



Cross-reference seismic hazard provisions in County building codes.



Housekeeping updates.

Critical Areas Ordinances

Proposed Changes – Frequently Flooded Areas



**Clarify when
habitat
assessments will
be needed in the
flood plain.**



**Update definitions
for consistency.**



**Clarify notification
protocols for
administratively
approved
variances.**



**Housekeeping
updates.**

Natural Resources

Differences Between Alternatives

1. No Action

-  Retains outdated critical area regulations - makes critical areas more susceptible to redevelopment impacts.
- Rely on existing conservation programs for carbon sequestration needs.
- Maintain existing programs to implement Sustainability 2030.

 = **Significant adverse impact**



2. Centers & Corridors

- Encouraging development in urban areas helps **reduce development pressure on forests** and farmland and limit habitat fragmentation.
- Sewer expansion** could protect public and environmental health.
- County run **water utility** could expand use of reclaimed water.
- Critical Area updates** consistent with Best Available Science.
- Expand programs to **improve energy efficiency** in new and existing buildings,



3. High-Capacity Transit



- Focusing development near transit and limiting development elsewhere is **more protective of forests and farmlands**.
- Limits growth in areas not likely to have urban services including transit.
- Critical Area updates** consistent with Best Available Science.
- Expand programs to improve energy efficiency** in new and existing buildings.
- Encourages carbon capture and storage** with new market-based incentives.
- Establishes a 40% goal for **urban tree canopy** coverage.

Water

EIS Analysis

 = Adverse impact identified
 = Impacts addressed with mitigation

1. No Action

-  Growth outside the UGA would result in more permit exempt wells being drilled.
-  More growth outside UGA leads to increased impervious surfaces and a greater impact on stormwater run off and surface water quality. Will require additional conveyance/treatment infrastructure.



More reliance on septic systems which return more water to groundwater, but increase risk of contamination.



2. Centers & Corridors

Policies limit withdrawals from permit exempt wells, complies with Streamflow Restoration Act. Water mostly from deeper wells, which have less impact on streamflow.

New infill development must comply with updated stormwater standards, protects surface water quality.

-  Development will require additional stormwater conveyance/treatment infrastructure. More affordable to provide to urban development.
-  Control pervious to impervious surface ratios to increase infiltration.

Wastewater upgrades required to serve more concentrated urban population.





3. High-Capacity Transit

Complies with Streamflow Restoration Act

New infill development must comply with updated stormwater standards, protects surface water quality.

Lower impervious surface area per housing unit protects surface water quality.

-  Development will require additional stormwater conveyance/treatment infrastructure. More affordable to provide to urban development.
-  Control pervious to impervious surface ratios to increase infiltration.

Wastewater upgrades required to serve more concentrated urban population.



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Capital Facilities and Transportation

Benefits and Tradeoffs between Alternatives

Capital Facilities and Transportation

Proposed Changes in all alternatives



Capital Facilities + Utilities

Provide same level of public services as County grows.

Provide healthy, safe and sustainable water.

Support services in underinvested areas such as broadband.



Essential Public Facilities

Recognize Sound Transit facilities.

Update definition and inventory.

Consider opportunity for community resilience hubs.



Transportation

Align the County's transportation system with the Regional Plans

Impacts on equity and the environment.

Improve safety and access for all cyclists + pedestrians.



Parks + Recreation

Integrate the County's 'Parks Recreation and Open Space' Plan.

Support walking access to parks.

Incorporate trails into the County's active transportation network.

Connecting Communities

Multi-Modal Approach to Growth

ALL Alternatives

Support safer and more attractive bus stops and shelters

❗ Congestion on SR7 and SR 161 expected to delay bus rapid transit in all alternatives



2. Centers & Corridors

Investments in transit facilities happen as development happens



3. High-Capacity Transit

County invests proactively in building out sidewalks and bike lanes connecting to transit to support growth



Transportation – Walking + Biking

Differences between alternatives



2. Centers & Corridors

- Develop a 'Level of Traffic Stress' (LTS) with **Design Requirements for pedestrian and bike facilities**. Allowed Level of Traffic stress would vary by traffic and type of facility.
- 6.6 miles of pedestrian and 23.7 miles of bike improvements.



3. High-Capacity Transit

- Adopt a **Level of Service for bike and pedestrian facilities**. Must be constructed concurrently with new development.
- **County builds pedestrian facilities** within ½ mile of High-Capacity Transit Routes.
- 9.6 miles of ped. and 34 miles of bike improvements.

LTS 1

Safe and comfortable for people of a wide range of ages and abilities



LTS 2

Comfortable in small segments for people of a wide range of ages and abilities



LTS 3

Tolerable for confident, experienced bicyclists and pedestrians



LTS 4

Uncomfortable for most people biking. Not suitable for pedestrians.



❗ Traffic stress for bikes and pedestrians is expected to increase under all alternatives, as population + travel increase.

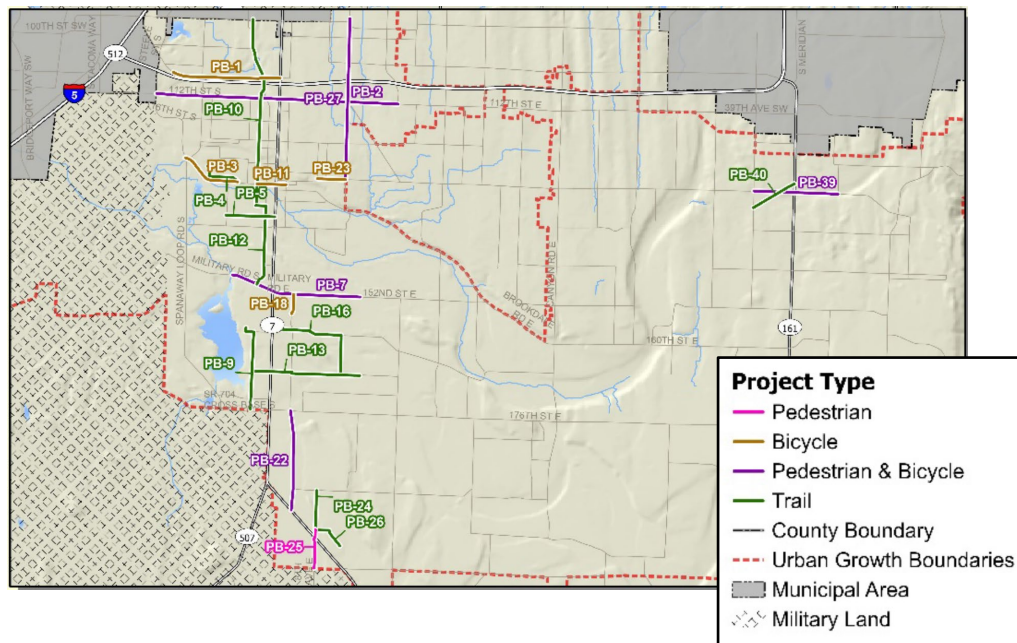
☑ Bike and pedestrian investments in Alt 2 & 3 help mitigate increased traffic stress.

Bike and Pedestrian Facilities



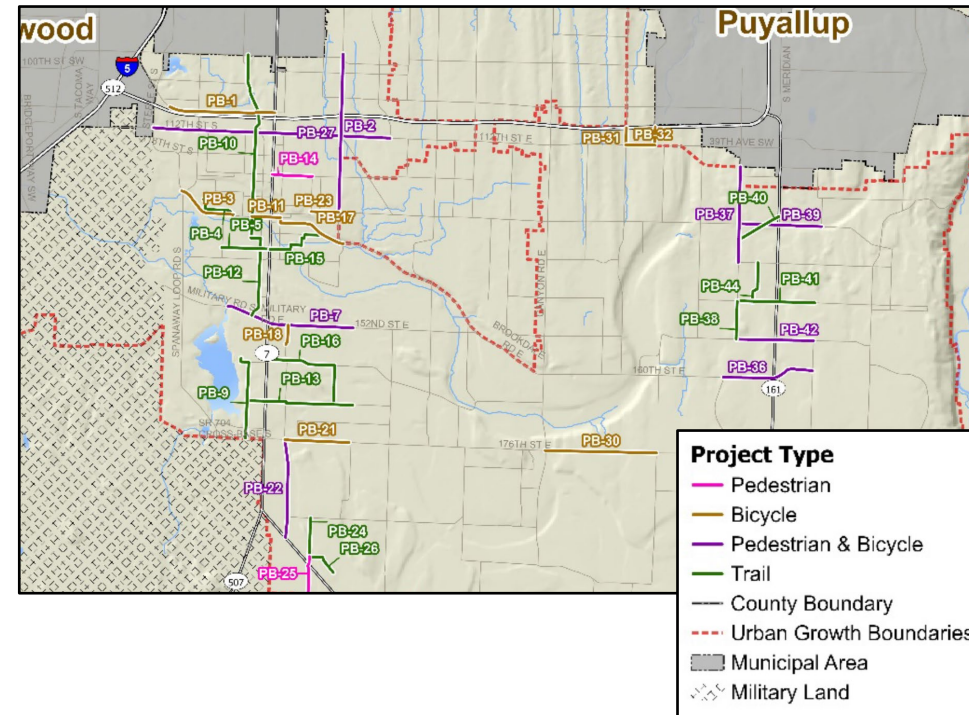
2. Centers & Corridors

6.6 miles of pedestrian and 23.7 miles of bike improvements.



3. High-Capacity Transit

9.6 miles of pedestrian and 34 miles of bike improvements.



Transportation – Car facilities

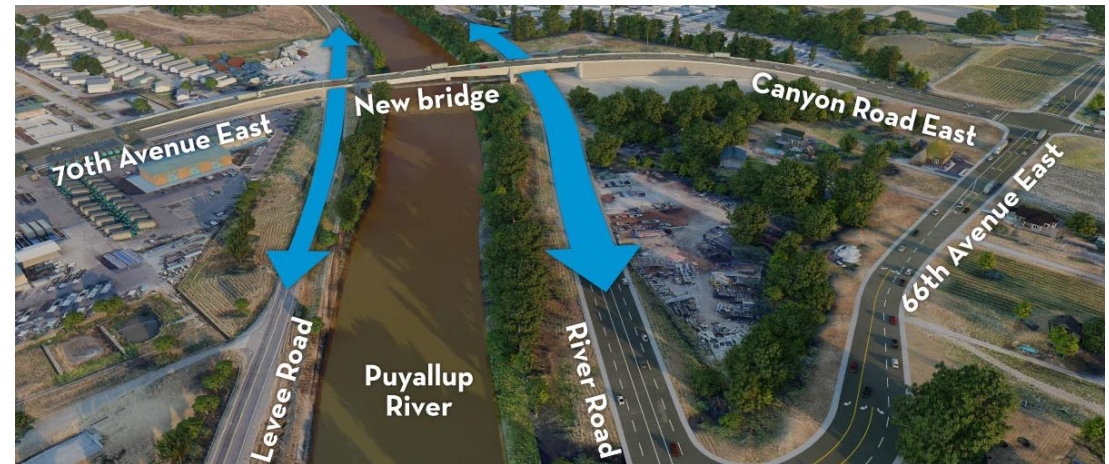
Differences between alternatives

2. Centers and Corridors

- Graduated Level Of Service (LOS) system would **allow more traffic congestion in urban than rural areas.**
- **Allow expansions of rural roads** that serve as arterials between urban areas and centers.

3. High-Capacity Transit Focus

- Graduated LOS system with **higher tolerance for congestion in urban areas** than Alt 2. Rural LOS would still have a low tolerance for congestion.
- **Limit the Canyon Road northerly extension** to the Milroy bridge replacement only.



Rendering of the Milroy bridge. From canyonroadconnection.org

Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)

Prioritizing and funding infrastructure + services



Identifies what facilities we need to serve expected growth.



'Level of Service' quantifies if we have enough facilities to meet the demands of the community.



Capital Improvement and Transportation Plans include details on infrastructure cost and funding. These are updated every year.





Ballpark estimates of 20-year cost show that the County should have revenue for required facilities.

Public Services

EIS Analysis



 = Adverse impact identified
 = Impacts addressed with mitigation

1. No Action

-  No policy support to prioritize accessibility to parks in urban areas. Could lead to greater health disparities for urban residents, particularly those without the resources to travel to access recreation elsewhere.
-  Dispersed Growth would increase demand for sheriff, fire and EMS over a larger areas, losing coverage efficiency that occurs in areas with denser development.






2. Centers & Corridors

- Support for increasing parks and open spaces in the urban area, but gaps in sidewalks make it difficult to safely access those parks.
-  Mitigation could include neighborhood greenways or safe routes to school program.
- Additional student growth within UUA school districts. Bethel and Puyallup School Districts are already showing deficit levels and will need capacity increases.
- Growth leads to increased demand for sheriff, fire and EMS, more concentrated in Central County.
-  Fire impact fees could support increased demand.



3. High-Capacity Transit

- Support for increasing parks and open spaces in the urban area, but gaps in sidewalks make it difficult to safely access those parks.
-  Mitigation could include neighborhood greenways or safe routes to school program.
-  Franklin Pierce would see about 2.8 times as much student growth in Alt 3 as other alternatives and would be above capacity by 2044.
- Growth leads to increased demand for sheriff, fire and EMS, more concentrated in Central County.
-  Fire impact fees could support increased demand.



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Housing and Land Use

Benefits and Tradeoffs between Alternatives

Housing and Land Use

Proposed Changes in all alternatives



Land Use

Encourage development near transit.
Impacts on Equity + Environment



Economic Development

Recognize contributions of the military and tribes.
Opportunity for all communities.
Support small businesses, including agri-tourism.



Housing

Assesses housing needs by income.
Increase housing supply, including ADUs, duplexes, triplexes and townhomes.
Address inequitable policies.



Design + Character

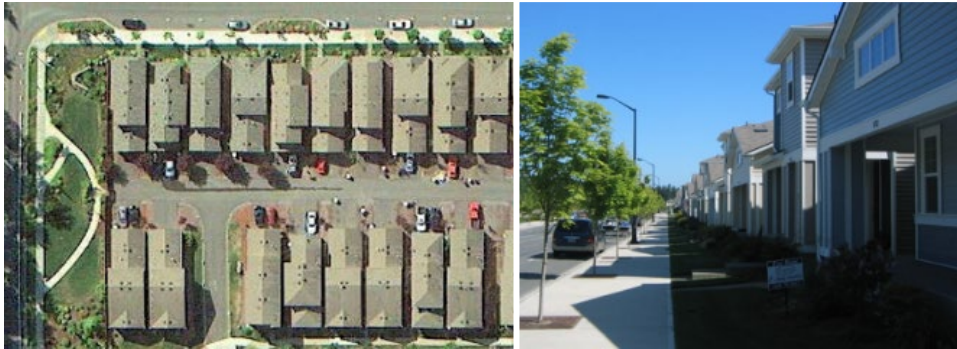
Encourage reuse of existing buildings.
Promote safe and attractive facilities.
Promote accessible design.
Promote energy efficient buildings.

Land Use – Additional Features



2. Centers & Corridors

- **Allow increased density in the entire urban area** by shifting to gross density calculations.
- **SEPA infill exemption** within the urban areas.

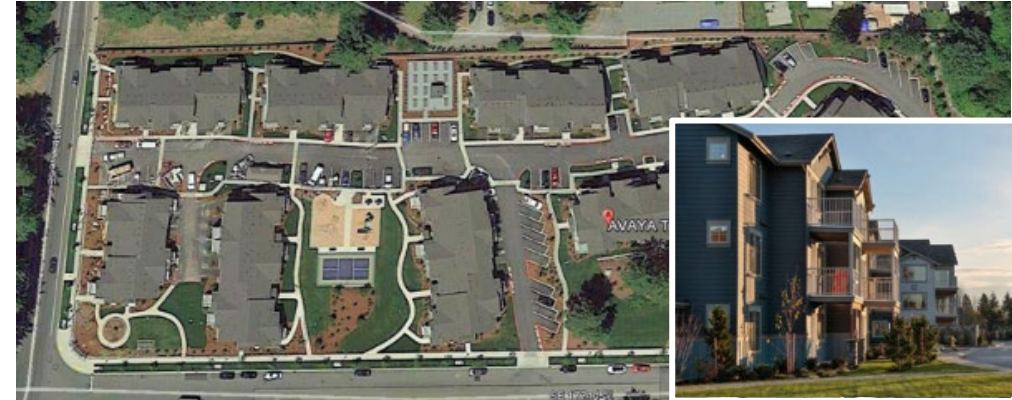


Density Example – 7.7 DU/ac.
Small lot homes in Lacey, WA



3. High-Capacity Transit

- **Limit new development in urban unincorporated and rural areas** through eliminating rural density bonuses and removing housing uses from commercial zones
- **SEPA infill exemption** within the high-capacity transit area only.

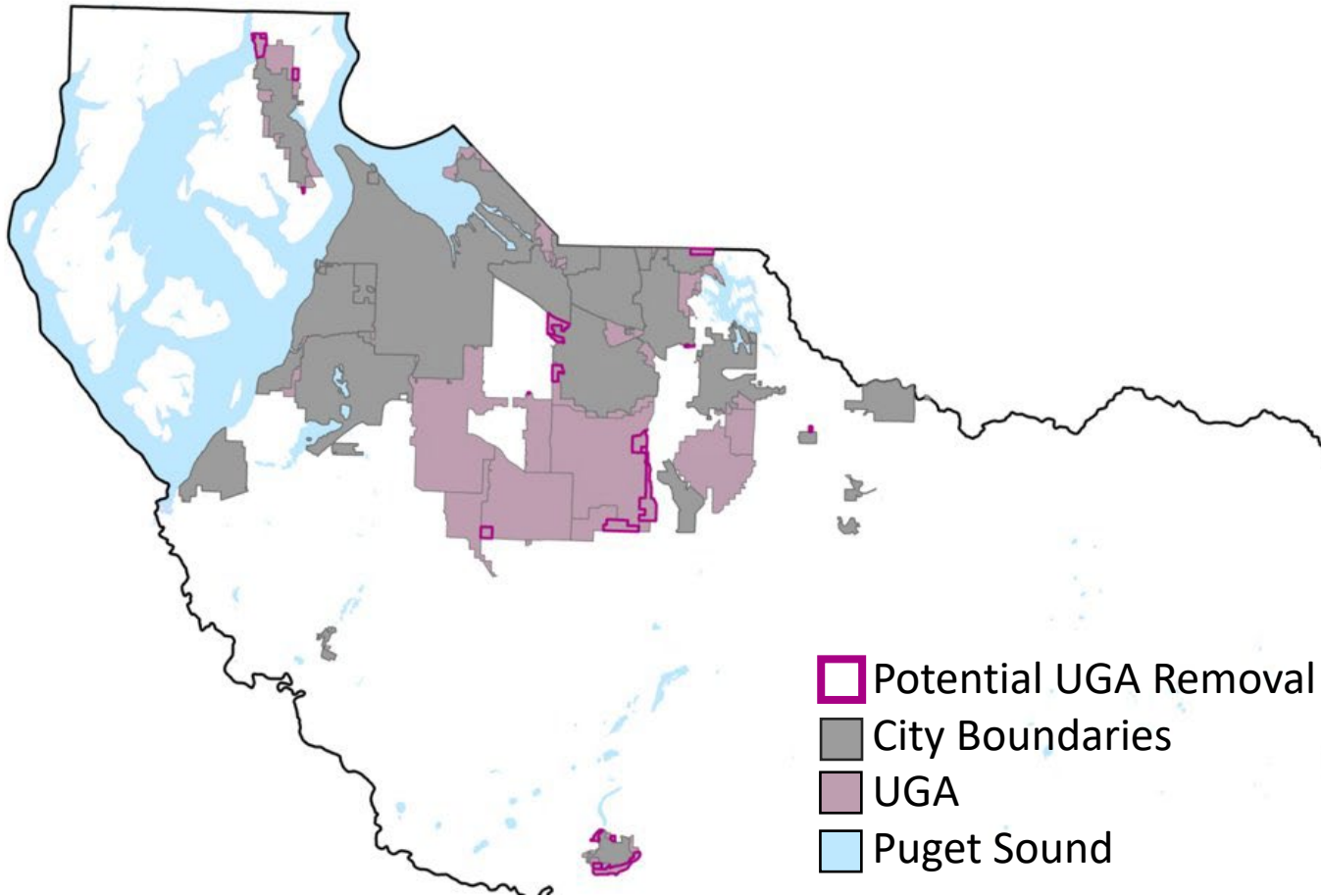


Density Example – 18 DU/ac.
Apartment community in Renton with surface parking and play area



3. High-Capacity Transit

Land Use – UGA Retraction



Urban Growth Area (UGA) retraction of 2,531 acres

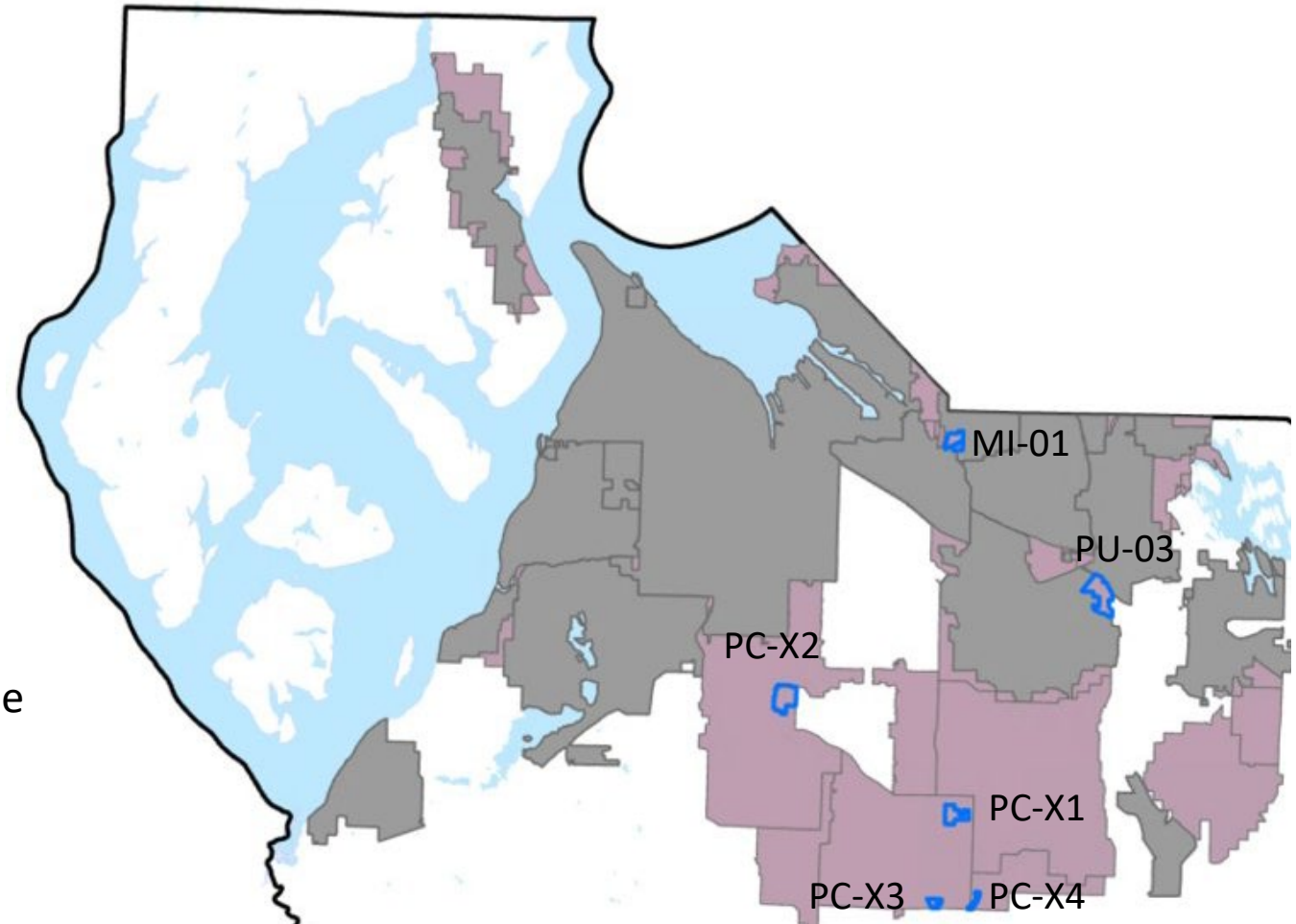
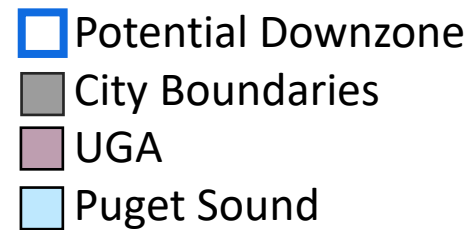
- The UGA is designated to encourage urban growth in these areas
- Retractions proposed in areas not likely to be served by urban infrastructure
- Will reduce capacity for growth in these areas
- Could help reduce development pressures rural lands by creating a buffer
- ***If your property would be affected by a UGA retraction you were sent a postcard***

Land Use – Proposed Downzones

Alt 2 & Alt 3

1,680 acres of proposed downzones:

- Consistent with information obtained for the Flood Hazard Management Plan.
- Capacity for development is already very low.
- Proposed zoning would be Residential Resource.



Land Use EIS Analysis

⚠ = Significant adverse impact

1. No Action

- ⚠ Does not meet Vision 2050.
- ⚠ Existing large excess capacity within the Urban Unincorporated Areas (UUAs) — **population growth inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.**
- ⚠ Dispersed development likely to result in change from rural to urban character.



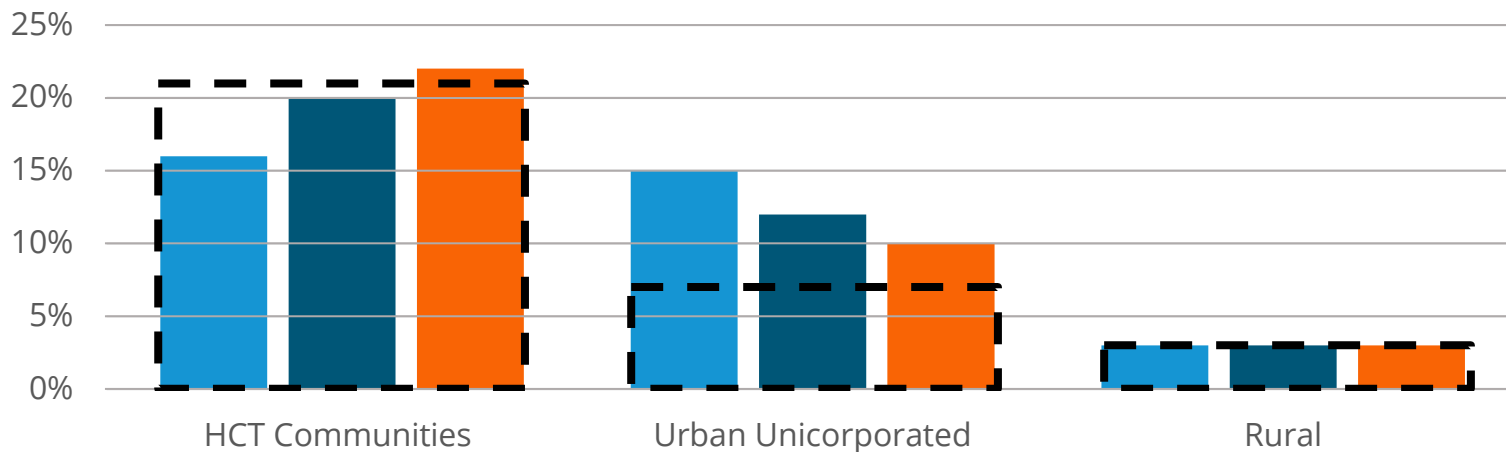
2. Centers & Corridors

- Meets Vision 2050 Policies
- ⚠ Further expands excess capacity within the Urban Unincorporated Areas (UUAs) — **population growth inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.**
- ⚠ Increased development pressures on urban open space.



3. High-Capacity Transit

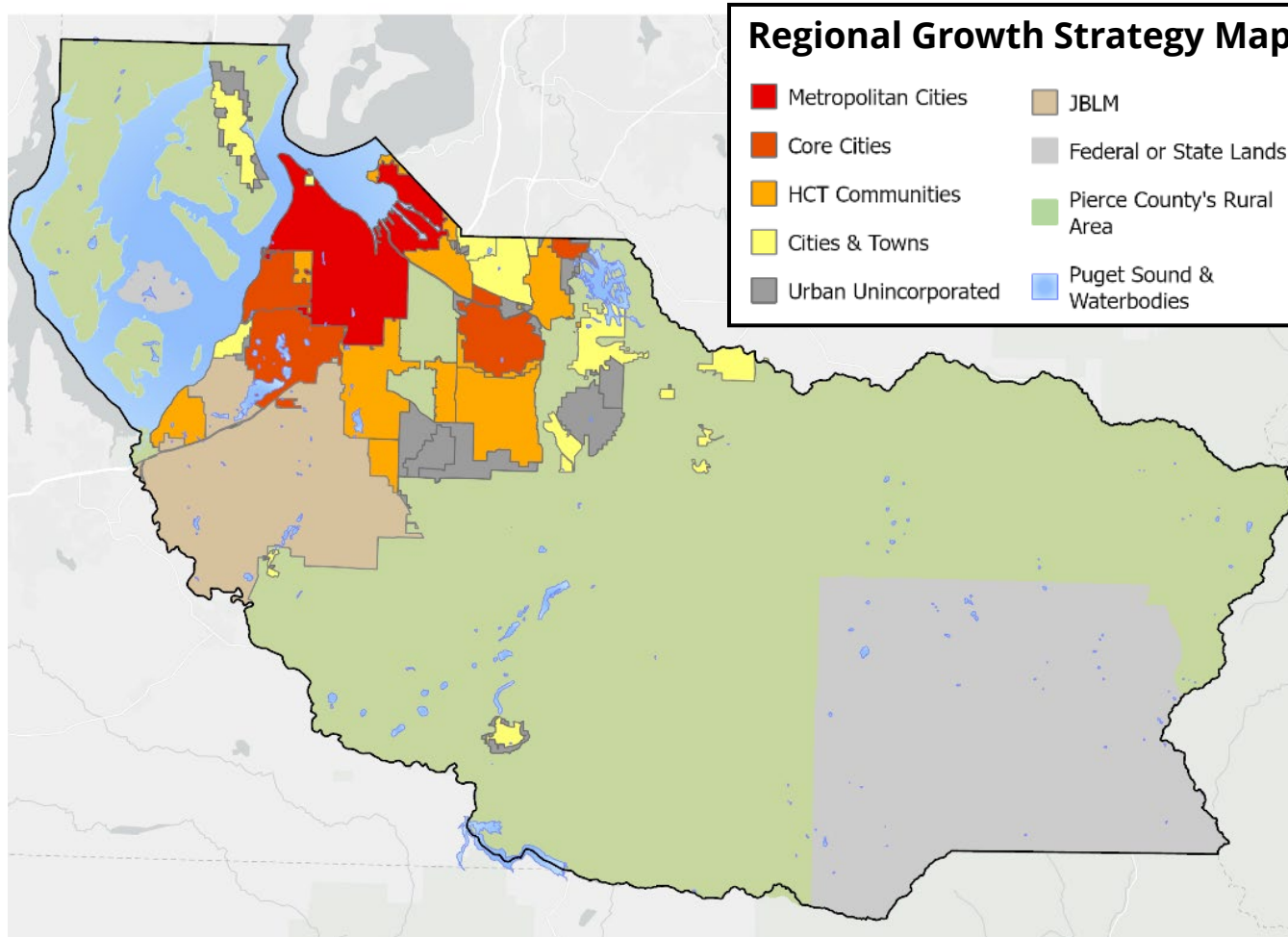
- Meets Vision 2050 Policies
- Lower capacity in urban unincorporated areas – best meets regional growth strategy.
- ⚠ Focusing density in High-Capacity Transit areas would increase traffic, noise and pedestrian activity. This could produce a cumulative adverse impact in these limited areas.
- ⚠ Increased development pressures on urban open space.



- PSRC Regional Growth Strategy
- 1. No Action
- 2. Center & Corridors
- 3. High Capacity Transit

Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)

EIS Analysis



Projected Population growth, By Alternative.

<i>Regional Geographies</i>	<i>RGS</i>	<i>Alt 1</i>	<i>Alt 2</i>	<i>Alt 3</i>
High-Capacity Transit	21%	16% !	20%	22%
Urban Unincorp.	8%	15% !	12% !	10%
Rural	3%	3%	3%	3%



! = Doesn't comply with Regional Growth Strategy (Significant adverse impact)

Housing

EIS Analysis = Adverse environmental impact identified

1. No Action


Larger units dispersed around county will be more expensive and further from services.

-  Insufficient units for low-income households.
-  No anti-displacement policies.



2. Centers & Corridors

Smaller units in already developed areas. Includes affordable housing and anti-displacement policies. Sufficient units for low-income households.

-  Exceeds growth target for Urban Unincorporated area.

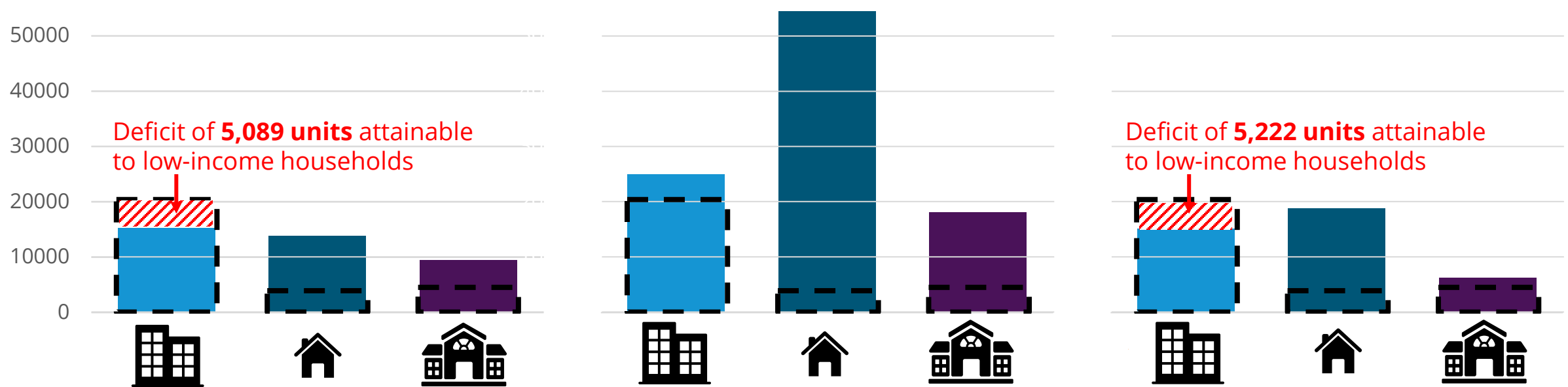


3. High-Capacity Transit

Focuses growth near transit and jobs and limits development elsewhere.

-  Insufficient units for low-income households, partially countered by new affordable housing policies.

Housing Capacity: ■ Apartments and ADUS ■ Moderate Density Single Family ■ Low-Density Single-Family  **Housing Need**



Access to Services

EIS Analysis

1. No Action

- ❗ Directs the most growth to areas w/ less access to services, including areas of employment growth.

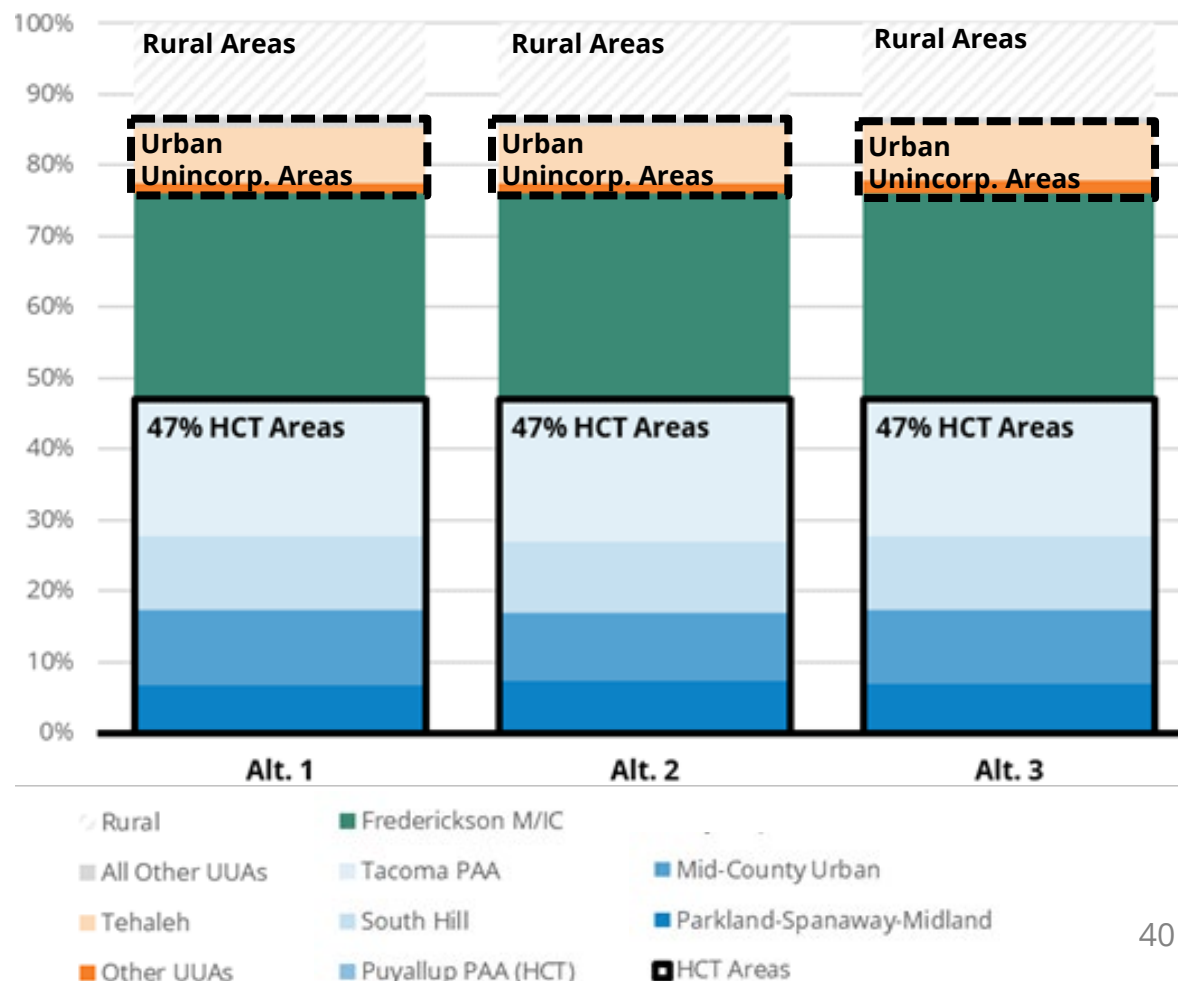
2. Centers and Corridors

Expands sewer capacity within the UGA to reduce environmental impacts and health risks associated with septic systems. This would support new housing growth.

3. High-Capacity Transit

Directs growth into areas with urban services, limits growth elsewhere. Directs the most growth into HCT areas, where homes will be near jobs.

Estimated Job Growth in the UGA



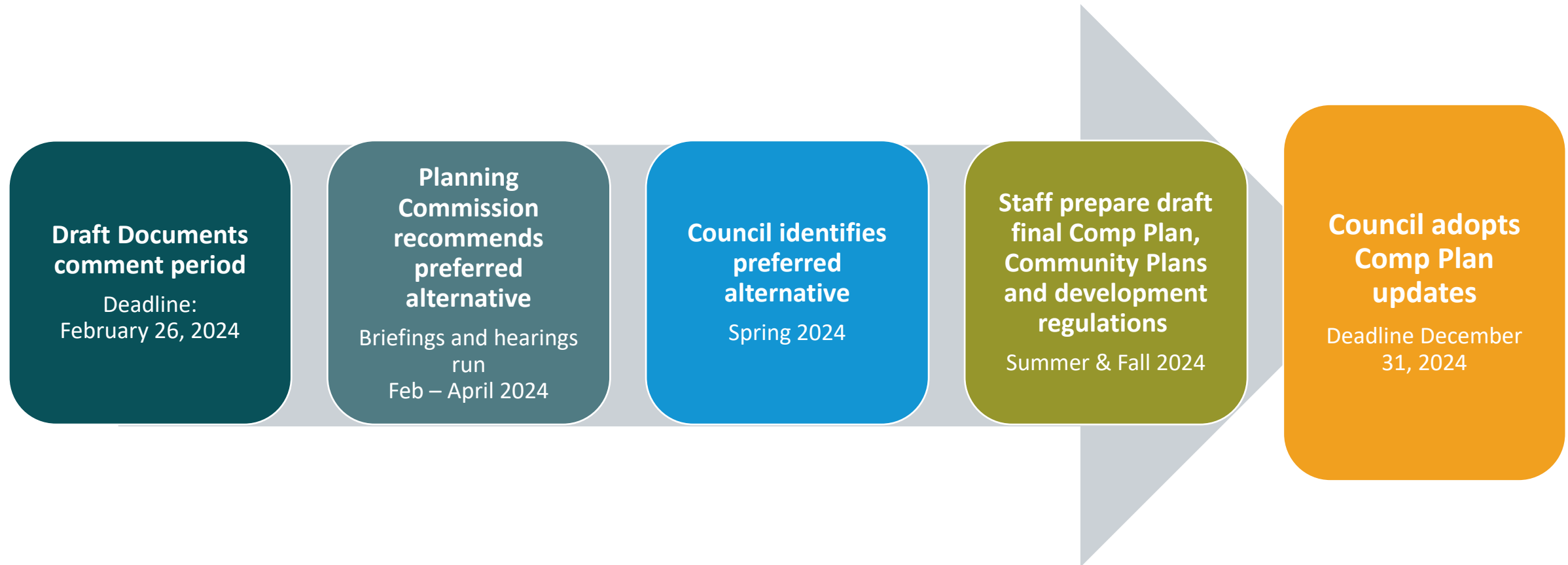


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Building the 'Preferred Alternative'

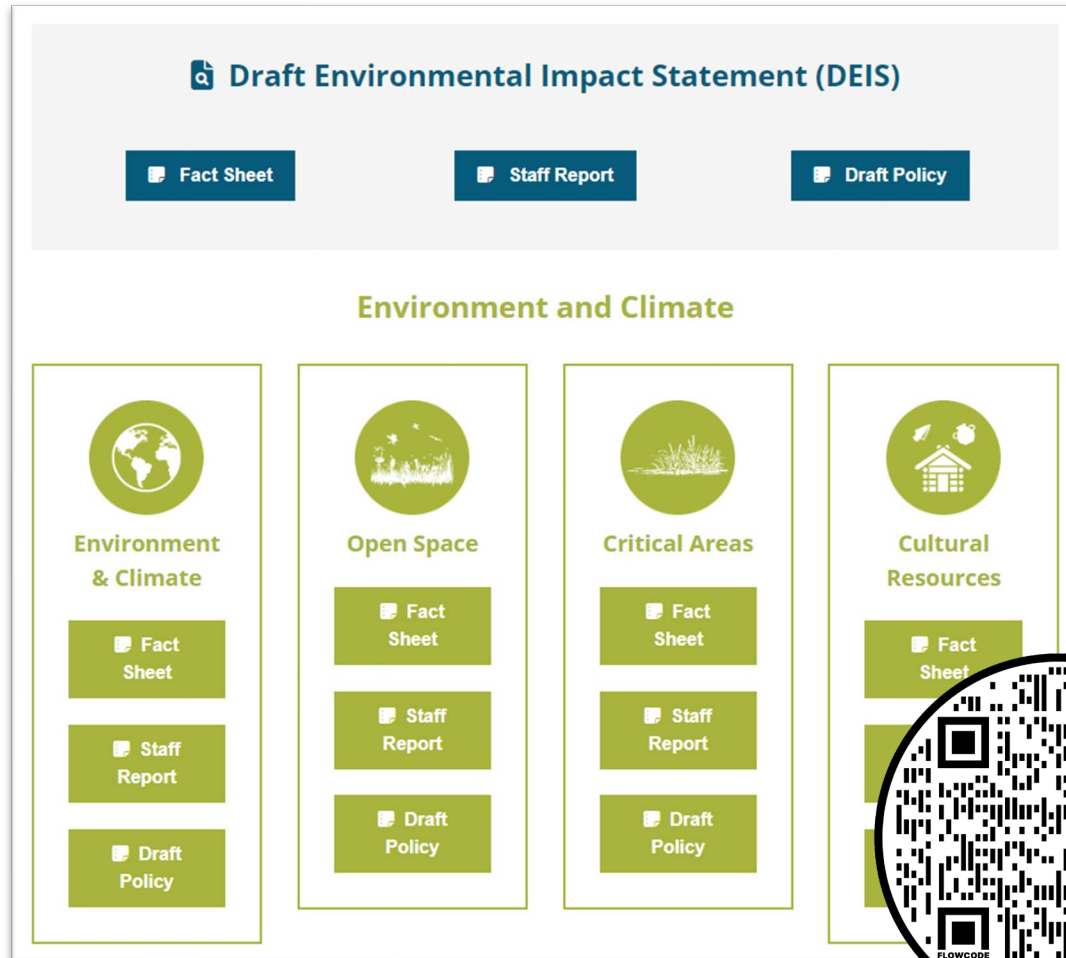
What input we need from you and how it will be used

Building the Preferred Alternative

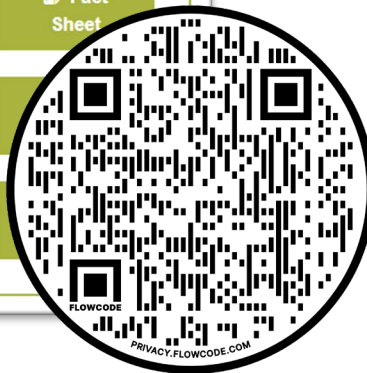


Comprehensive Plan Web site

PierceCountyWa.gov/CompPlanDrafts

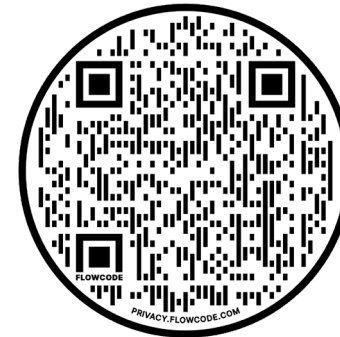


- Information is organized by element (chapter)
- There are three levels of information for each topic:
 - 1 page fact sheet
 - Staff report summarizes changes and explains why they were made. Discusses how each change may impact equity.
 - Draft policies – full element with changes marked up.



How to provide comment:

- **Verbal Comments** may be given at the end of this meeting, or at future meetings. 3 minutes each to speak. Staff will take notes on your points.
- **Written comments** may be provided by
 - Email to: CompPlanUpdate@PierceCountyWa.gov
 - Online open house: direc.to/knpM
 - Mailed to: Long Range Planning
2401 S 35th St, Room 2
Tacoma, WA 98409
- **In-person comments** may be provided at the Pierce County Public Services Building (Annex) at 2401 S. 35th Street in Tacoma



Deadline for comments is 4:30 pm February 26, 2024



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Learn more and provide input

www.PierceCountyWa.gov/CompPlanDrafts

CompPlanUpdate@piercecountywa.gov

