

# **PSRC Regional Open Space Conservation Plan PUBLIC COMMENT**

<https://www.psrc.org/our-work/regional-open-space-conservation-plan>

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **An Open Space Vision**

Cyclists bike through a forest of tall evergreens as they cross the Kitsap peninsula. Hikers arrive at regional trailheads where they enjoy a day of contemplation in nature. A new generation of farmers continue the region's farming legacy. They experience abundant harvests and enjoy convenient access to neighboring urban markets where people shop for farm fresh produce. Residents of all races, income levels, and ages are healthy, active, and enjoy their local parks and the region's wild open spaces. Streams are full of salmon jostling for space to spawn. Osprey and bald eagles pluck salmon from the waters to feed their young. Flocks of shorebirds rest and forage along the Snohomish and Stillaguamish estuaries. Elk meander along the White River, munching on vegetation. Working together, the region's communities enjoy the benefits of the regional open space network that they have preserved and protected for future generations.

*COMMENT: As representatives from the Rural Area of King County, we support the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan (ROSCP) to identify conservation priorities to sustain our open spaces and ecological systems.*

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### **Open Space in the Puget Sound Region**

Open space includes a wide spectrum of public and private, urban and rural, natural and working lands. It includes lands such as trails, forests, farms, wetlands, floodplains, and shorelines. The basic geography of the ecological systems that form open spaces is the watershed. What happens in one part of a watershed impacts other parts of the watershed. Consequently, this plan considers open spaces by watershed.

*COMMENT: We consider such a "watershed" approach as critical to addressing key ecological factors.*

Open space is critical natural infrastructure for the region that provides essential economic, recreational, cultural, aesthetic, and ecological services. As of 2015, open spaces in the region provided at least \$11.4 to \$25.2 billion annually to the economy. i These benefits include clean water, food, recreation, flood storage, carbon storage, and

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wood products. Open spaces contribute to both the physical and mental health of residents in region. They filter air and water, provide recreational opportunities, improve attention, and provide a sense of wellbeing.

Working lands provide jobs for farmers and timber employees. The big, wild open spaces in our region support a thriving and growing recreation and tourism industry. They also help companies attract employees, who want to live somewhere with a high quality of life.

To ensure that these open spaces can continue to support the region's economy and quality of life, this plan maps out the region's open space network, identifies the parts of the network that are already protected, highlights remaining conservation needs, and presents an action plan to achieve these needs.

*COMMENT: We see how open spaces help to directly and indirectly support our Rural Area economy.*

### **The Regional Open Space Network 1.0**

For the first time, this plan envisions a complete regional open space network that weaves together and enhances the region's many open space resources (Figure E.1). With the guidance of an advisory committee, the network was developed through a data-driven, collaborative process that involved a diverse set of stakeholders, representing counties, cities, tribes, resource agencies, nonprofits, educational institutions, and businesses. In this way, the plan builds on the existing conservation planning efforts in the central Puget Sound region.

*COMMENT: We believe the King County Rural Area Unincorporated Area Councils should be represented on the PSRC's ROSCP Advisory Committee.*

The regional open space network includes six types of open space:

**Aquatic systems.** The region's marine waters, lakes and river systems are crucial for the overall health of Puget Sound's ecological health, the recovery of threatened salmon populations, and flood hazard

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protection for our communities. Because these systems are so critical, watersheds should be the fundamental unit to consider in regional environmental planning.

**Farmlands and working forests** are resource lands that are necessary for maintaining agriculture and forestry economies in the region and for providing

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important ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, stormwater management, and recreation.

**Natural lands** are areas important for supporting wildlife and providing opportunities for aesthetic experiences and recreation.

**Regional trails** are active transportation corridors that connect communities and important regional destinations.

**Urban open space** is the system of parks and green spaces that provide recreational, aesthetic, and health benefits within an accessible distance to the region's urban residents.

*COMMENT: While we consider each of these critically important to a vibrant open space network, we do not believe King County government fully shares that belief based on past and present permitting and zoning decisions.*

The regional open space network provides a unified, regional context for local conservation and planning efforts and lays out a vision for open space in the central Puget Sound region. The network highlights open spaces that cross jurisdictional boundaries and lands that provide multiple open space services. It also increases attention on the value and importance of open spaces in the region and thus can help attract additional funding. The regional open space network covers about 3.8 million acres of public and private land (Figure E.2). About 54 percent of the regional open space network has long-term protection through public ownership and conservation easements. Working lands designations help protect an additional 1.2 million acres of privately owned farms and working forests. Other private lands may be protected through environmental regulations, but many areas may lack protection altogether.

*COMMENT: We remain concerned with the loss of working farmland as development pressures continue to be exerted.*

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### **The Challenge**

A strong economy in the region is leading to growth and development, which puts pressure on the open space network. Preliminary estimates indicate that the population of the region is expected to grow by an additional 1.8 million by 2050, creating demand for new housing and commercial areas. Planning efforts rarely take the regional open space or watershed context into consideration, leading to the gradual loss of open space lands across the region.

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*COMMENT: We strongly echo this concern. Only strong adherence to the State's Growth Management Act through permitting, zoning, code enforcement, and infrastructure placement will we be able to properly absorb such numbers of people over the next three decades.*

Among the categories of open spaces in the region, farmland may be under the greatest threat. A range of factors is reducing the economic viability of farmland, including increasing land values, farm costs exceeding revenues, lack of supporting infrastructure, a lack of new farmers filling retiring farmers' shoes, and farming lands that lack protection through zoning or other regulatory designations. Only 58 percent of farmland in the open space network has a protective agricultural zoning designation.

*COMMENT: Again, we share this concern for the loss of working farmland. Possibly incentives can help turn the tide.*

Growth in recent years has resulted in loss of tree cover and hardening of the region's watersheds. Within the urban growth areas, 8,900 acres of tree cover were lost between 2006 and 2013. In rural areas, ~~XX~~ acres of tree cover were lost over the same period.

*COMMENT: Stronger laws are necessary to ensure swaths of forest aren't simply clearcut for new development and replaced by young saplings, many of which do not survive.*

At the same time, current conservation efforts face barriers to protecting remaining high value open spaces. Lack of funding for preservation and enhancement is a persistent constraint to open space conservation. Land prices are increasing, making purchase of land and conservation easements more challenging. New, non-traditional sources of conservation funds and innovative land preservation techniques will be necessary.

*COMMENT: We stand ready to support such "innovative techniques."*

Approximately 788,000 acres of the regional open space network are outside of public or tribal ownership. Of those, there are 126,000 acres of farmland considered to be at risk, 188,000 acres of working forest considered to be at risk, and 133,000 acres of intact habitat in natural lands and aquatic systems considered to be at risk (Figure E.3). Combined, these total to 448,000 acres of at-risk open spaces within the regional network.

*COMMENT: We too are alarmed at the ~half a million acres of identified open space at risk.*

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### **Access to Open Space**

Open spaces provide significant physical and mental health benefits and contribute to a high quality of life. However, not everyone in the region has easy access to open space. Access to open space refers both to the ability to go to large, wild open spaces and the ability to go to local parks and recreation areas (“urban open space”). Access to large, wild open spaces almost invariably requires a car and leisure time, adding barriers to access, especially for people with lower incomes. For these populations, urban open space that is within easy access of home (called “nearby nature”) may take on greater importance.

This plan maps urban open space and analyzes residents’ access to that urban open space. Using a preliminary analysis, approximately 70 percent of residents in the designated urban area are within walking distance of a park, open space, or trail. That leaves 30 percent of residents in the region’s urban areas, however, who lack easy access to open space. This plan explores a potential methodology to target areas for open space investment to close this gap. While local urban parks are generally the responsibility of local city and county governments, a regional approach to analyzing urban open space needs supports considering how to equitably target resources to underserved communities.

### **Action Plan**

This plan identifies approximately 448,000 acres of the regional open space network that are most at risk of conversion to developed uses with resulting degradation or elimination of open space benefits. To protect these areas from development and to preserve the open space services they provide, this plan charts several strategies the region, local jurisdictions, resource agencies, conservation non-profits, and others can act on.

The key strategies in the action plan are:

- 1. Incorporate open space conservation into all levels of planning.** Regional plans, as well as city and county plans, can integrate the regional open space network and prioritize conservation.
- 2. Support growth in the right places.** Focusing growth in the appropriate locations will continue to reduce development pressure on the regional open space network.
- 3. Keep working lands working.** Enhance the regional transfer of development rights program, provide support to farmers, and foster farm and forest economies. Maintain agricultural and forestry zoning designations.

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**4. Protect remaining key habitat areas.** Ensure that critical areas and shoreline regulations are protecting the region's remaining habitat areas. Land acquisition and/or conservation easements may be needed to provide the best habitat protection, but will require significant conservation funding.

**5. Enhance stewardship on privately owned lands.** Implement Public Benefit Ratings Systems. Work with conservation districts and non-profit organizations to provide support to landowners. Explore the use of ecosystem markets to preserve open space services on private lands.

**6. Restore habitat in high value areas.** Restoration will be necessary to recover salmon populations. Watershed plans have identified needed restoration projects. Mitigation banking can help fund some restoration.

**7. Coordinate planning among and within agencies and jurisdictions.** Many open spaces cross jurisdictional boundaries, requiring coordination to protect them. Many open space lands are important to multiple resource agencies. Maintaining these open space services will require coordination among these different groups.

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**8. Increase connections between people and open space.** Ensure all population segments have access to parks and open space. Build out the trail network and provide transit options to regional parks and open space.

**9. Build multi-benefit green infrastructure.** Green infrastructure improves stormwater flows, removes pollutants, enhances aquatic systems, and provides recreation and aesthetic opportunities.

*COMMENT: While all nine of these "key strategies" are important, number 7. calling for real coordination possibly is the most critical to ensuring the other eight can be successful, as all too often different jurisdictions and agencies work in their respective "silos," often with blinders on.*

Some of the most effective conservation programs use multiple strategies and tools. This plan provides a list of conservation tools (Appendix B), many of which have been used by one or more jurisdictions in the region, but could be enhanced and used more widely. Five of the tools have been identified as highly promising tools, but barriers exist that prevent full effectiveness:

- Transfer of development rights (TDR)
- Watershed plans
- Ecosystem service markets

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- Multi-benefit green infrastructure
- Public/private partnerships

To accelerate conservation, the region should work to remove barriers, and enhance and promote these tools.

*COMMENT: Once again, each of these “tools” is subject to jurisdictional “silos,” which must be torn down to be truly successful.*

### **Making the Plan Real**

Many partners are needed to successfully implement this plan, including cities, counties, tribes, conservation districts, resource agencies, and conservation non-profits. The Action Plan in Chapter 6 identifies specific actions that local jurisdictions can consider and, where appropriate, bring into their work programs. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) can support the work of counties and cities interested in incorporating the regional open space network into their planning efforts. PSRC can also bring together other partners and help facilitate coordination among jurisdictions.

*COMMENT: The PSRC’s help here is critical as a regional perspective is necessary to help pull together various jurisdictions often working at cross-purposes to each other.*

However, with 448,000 acres at risk, this plan requires enhanced efforts and new partners such as the Emerald Alliance, a new regional collaborative designed to help improve coordination among the many entities working to protect and conserve the region’s open spaces. The conservation tools called out in this plan must be enhanced and shared so that they are used more effectively and widely across the region. PSRC can advance the use of these tools and identify opportunities to pilot new tools.

The forthcoming VISION 2050 provides an opportunity to incorporate the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan into regional planning. To track progress over time, PSRC can report on key open space performance measures. As conservation in the region progresses and lessons are learned, the plan will need to be updated accordingly.

*COMMENT: Keeping the ROPCP current will be important to achieving real sustainable conservation.*

### **The Time Is Now**

The regional open space network is a core component of the region’s economy, quality of life, and identity. It makes the region a desirable place to live and work. However, if we do not carefully adhere to our regional vision to protect the open space network, we risk losing the very open spaces that draw people and companies to locate here. The

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region is at a critical point – there is still time to preserve the region’s prized open spaces, but only if we act now. Most critically, our actions must be **collaborative** with all parties working in concert for maximum efficiency; **equitable**, to ensure that all enjoy the benefits that open spaces provide, and **strategic**,

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concentrating our efforts toward the most effective actions. It is toward these objectives that this plan is aimed.

1 Chadsey, M., Z. Christin, and A. Fletcher. 2015. Central Puget Sound Open Space Valuation Study. Earth Economics, Tacoma, WA. Prepared for: Regional Open Space Strategy, University of Washington.



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### **7. FROM PLAN TO ACTION: FIRST STEPS**

#### *WHAT ARE NEXT STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN?*

Putting this plan into action will require implementation actions by PSRC and many other partners in the region. This chapter identifies several important first steps.

#### **7.1 Put the Plan into Action**

To help accelerate conservation in the region, this plan must be used by conservation organizations, including counties, cities, other public agencies, and non-profits. Crucially, collaboration among these groups will be necessary to use resources efficiently and effectively. The strategies, actions, and tools described in Chapter 6 are the toolbox that these partners will need to draw from to increase conservation. PSRC will promote the use of this plan as the region's conservation action plan. PSRC has already engaged with regional partners throughout the process of developing this plan, particularly with cities and counties who make up the majority of PSRC's membership.

***COMMENT:** We suggest the PSRC establish a new Environmental Sustainability Board to parallel its already existing Boards: Transportation Policy, Growth Management Policy, and Economic Development, thus elevating the importance of our shared natural environment.*

Engaging other partners beyond PSRC membership will be critical. The ROSS project identified convening a collaborative alliance as a key strategy in its final strategy report. One organization that is particularly well suited to enhance collaboration is the Emerald Alliance for People, Nature and Community. The Emerald Alliance is a new multi-sector effort that aims to enhance collaboration to support the conservation of open space in the region. The Emerald Alliance can serve as a forum to engage partners across the region, helping to broaden collaboration to other sectors, as well as work with PSRC and government organizations.

PSRC will work with the Emerald Alliance and other partners on implementing strategies and actions listed in this plan, such as increasing awareness of the importance of open space access and conservation, and coordinating on conservation opportunities. Some illustrative conservation opportunities are highlighted in Chapter 5, and a more complete list of opportunities is in Appendix A.

An important role for PSRC will be to assist member jurisdictions interested in incorporating aspects of this plan into their own planning and work programs.

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*COMMENT: Again, we suggest the PSRC's role should be far more than "assisting" jurisdictions. Rather, the PSRC must bring jurisdictions together, help foster real dialogue, provide the most current conservation evaluation tools, etc.*

### **7.2 Advance the Use of Key Conservation Tools**

Chapter 6 describes key open space conservation strategies and Appendix B describes tools to help implement these strategies. Some tools could be enhanced and shared so that they are more effective and widely used across the region. Several promising tools to advance conservation, along with ideas to make them more effective, are described below. These tools were identified in consultation with the plan's advisory committee as priorities to advance this plan over the short to medium term.

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Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)/Land Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program (LCLIP). More land in the regional open space network can be conserved through greater use of the regional TDR program. PSRC boards and committees could be a path for communicating this opportunity, including improvements to the program. As described in Chapter 6, achieving an even larger scale of protection through TDR will require counties to expand their programs, including working with cities to identify TDR receiving areas and to support successful transactions.

*COMMENT: Though a good concept, the current King County TDR program remains fraught with potential loopholes and needs a review to ensure it is working as intended.*

Ecosystem services markets. Funding conservation through ecosystem service markets is not common in the region. Given the high-value services that open spaces provide, this is a promising tool that could be more widely used. The most common ecosystem service markets are carbon markets and water quality markets. If a carbon tax were enacted in Washington, it could establish a direct market for carbon credits. To further use of ecosystem service markets, entities such as the state, utilities, corporations, and others for whom there is a vested interest should work together to explore the development of a program. One early step would be an analysis of potential ecosystem service market credits and the market potential for selling them. It will be necessary to work closely with regulatory agencies as many markets are hinged on helping purchasers of credits comply with environmental regulations.

*COMMENT: While this concept has much potential, it must be ensured there is buy-in by the various parties.*

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Return on investment analysis. Until recently, the benefits provided by natural systems have not been included in accounting or economic analysis; effectively, they have been valued at 0i.

This often led to minimizing investment in natural systems to reduce project costs. Now, with better economic tools and information on natural systems, reliable dollar values can be assigned to the benefits that flow from open space in the region. With fully valued benefits, the value of projects that conserve and integrate natural systems become more

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apparent. To understand the value of conserving land in the regional open space network, a return on investment analysis could be performed by county and open space category, and for the region as a whole. This would help elected officials and others to consider policy or expenditure trade-offs and make the case for why open space conservation is a good investment and worth paying for.

*COMMENT: We could not echo this more, as this is all wrapped up in “externalizing” costs and “internalizing” profits. This has led to abuse of our natural systems for the benefit of few and to the detriment of all.*

Watershed-based stormwater plans. Few watershed-based stormwater plans have been completed in the region. These stormwater plans make land use recommendations based on current development, watershed characteristics, and other factors, and identify infrastructure needs, habitat restoration projects, and other improvements. These plans should involve all jurisdictions in the watershed. Encouraging the development of a few pilot watershed plans in basins that are ready to take that step could provide examples and lessons learned for other basins in the region. Funding for jurisdictions to be able to participate in this process may be needed. A possible source is National Estuary Program funds distributed by the Puget Sound Partnership through its Action Agenda. Other possible funding sources are listed in Appendix B, Conservation Toolbox, under Planning and Regulatory Tools.

*COMMENT: We support our Watershed Basin Planning efforts while recognizing both public and private property rights.*

Multi-benefit green infrastructure. Multi-benefit green infrastructure projects can be difficult to plan, design and finance due to institutional and funding barriers. PSRC could facilitate the sharing of lessons learned from such projects that have already been completed. PSRC could also identify barriers and opportunities to overcome the barriers. A next step could be to help secure funding for initial steps to plan for stormwater park pilot projects that manage stormwater and provide green recreational

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space in regional growth centers currently lacking that infrastructure. Cities that are interested in participating in a pilot project would need to identify land for the park and be willing to dedicate public works, parks, and planning staff time to plan the project.

Public private partnerships/impact investing. Impact investing harnesses private financing mechanisms to provide capital for public projects that have an environmental purpose. Futurewise recently convened regional conservation leaders and experts in impact investing to identify possible impact investing opportunities for the region. Futurewise is doing additional work to explore this tool. PSRC will continue to monitor findings and consider appropriate ways to contribute to the project.

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### **7.3 Incorporate the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan into VISION 2050**

The development of VISION 2050 provides an opportunity to update open space information, policies, and actions to continue to reduce development threats to open space and increase conservation. Open space topic areas to consider in the VISION 2050 planning process include:

1. Focusing growth within a stable urban growth area
2. Protection and restoration of lands in the regional open space network
3. Impacts of development on the regional open space network
4. Open space access for all people
5. Health of Puget Sound and aquatic systems in the region
6. Water as a resource
7. Multi-benefit green infrastructure
8. Tree canopy protection
9. Stewardship by private landowners
10. Regional trails in both the regional transportation network and the regional open space network

Information on open space services, the regional open space network, and other information from the plan can be used to update the environmental baseline chapter and environment section in VISION 2050.

***COMMENT:*** *We agree and will continue to participate in the VISION 2050 process.*

The steps outlined in this chapter will help assess actions in VISION 2050 and may result in new environmental actions, such as:

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- Participate in regional environmental planning efforts that help jurisdictions protect open space, the environment, and human health.
- Provide technical assistance on open space issues and connect jurisdictions with collaborative partners and resources.
- Participate in planning to prioritize and implement transportation stormwater retrofits to improve water quality.

**COMMENT:** *Again, we support a “regional” perspective and the PSRC’s role in ensuring same.*

### **7.4 Track Performance**

The performance measures listed here are proposed aspirational goals and benchmarks to measure the progress and success of the plan. PSRC manages many types of data for its programs, and will look for opportunities to track the performance measures listed below.

#### **7.4.1 Long-term conservation**

The preservation of open space can be tracked using regulatory, ownership, and canopy cover data. By 2050:

- Working lands designations will be maintained, and enlarged where feasible.
- 95,000 acres of farmland are protected through conservation easements to increase the viability of local farming and improve food security in the region.

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- 187,000 acres of working forests are protected through conservation easements to increase the viability of forestry and provide forest products.
- 48,000 acres of aquatic system lands are protected through land purchase or conservation easement to secure habitat and protect communities from flooding.
- 85,000 acres of natural lands are protected through land purchase or conservation easement to secure habitat and increase recreational opportunities.

**COMMENT:** *We support the use of such “conservation easements” such that, whether a landowner sells or donates their development rights, they are properly compensated and continue to own and use their land and can sell it or pass it on to their heirs.*

#### **7.4.2 Conservation in the short-term**

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Ongoing and emerging efforts will help protect areas of the regional open space network by land purchase or conservation easement in the near term. One example of a current effort is King County's land conservation initiative which, if successful, will conserve more than 66,000 acres of high conservation value lands within a generation.

- Short-term conservation goal: An additional 80,000 acres of open space has long-term protection by 2025.

### **7.4.3 Tree Canopy cover**

As described in Chapter 3, tree canopy covers 54 percent of the region. Within the regional open space network, it covers 60 percent.

- By 2050, tree canopy cover for the region is 54 percent, or no net loss over time.
- As the region grows, tree canopy cover in the regional open space network increases.

### **7.4.4 Urban parks, trails, and open space access**

Chapter 5 describes access to parks, open space and trails and identifies gaps in access to these resources.

- By 2050, every urban resident will live within walking distance of a park, open space or trail.
- By 2050 the regional trail network will provide comprehensive nonmotorized access north-south and from urban areas to the region's wildlands.

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### **7.4.5 Puget Sound Partnership indicators and targets**

PSRC, the Emerald Alliance, and other partners will continue to coordinate with the Puget Sound Partnership as implementing this plan will greatly contribute to the recovery of Puget Sound. To track progress toward recovery goals for Puget Sound, the Puget Sound Partnership chose a set of measures called the Puget Sound Vital Signs<sup>2</sup>. The tracking and reporting of Vital Signs is the foundation of the shared measurement system the Partnership relies on to show collective impact. PSRC can track how it is contributing to progress using data from the State of the Sound reports. The Vital Signs that are the most closely tied to the work of PSRC are in the Land Cover & Development category. A description of the indicators in that category are below.

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Growth in Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). This indicator tracks the proportion of population growth occurring within UGAs. The 2020 recovery target for this indicator is that 86.5 percent of population growth occurs within UGAs. Puget Sound basin-wide population growth occurring within UGAs was 83 percent between 2000 and 2010. For the central Puget Sound region, PSRC data from recent years show this advancing to over 95 percent.

*COMMENT: Unfortunately, at least in King County, the UGA has “spines” that reach out from the center to faraway urban fringes, thus putting undue development pressure on nearby open space lands.*

Rate of Forest Loss Cover to Development. This indicator is measured by the number of acres of non-federal forest land cover converted to development. The 2020 target is a rate of forest loss of 1,000 acres per year. The status of this indicator is improving relative to the baseline reference, and is making progress toward the 2020 target.

*COMMENT: Again, indiscriminate clearcutting for sprawling development is completely unnecessary. Jurisdictions must enforce their laws or promulgate new ones to ensure this does not go—every mature tree need not be cut.*

Conversion of ecologically important lands. This indicator tracks ecologically important lands under development pressure in Puget Sound watersheds. The 2020 target is for a 0.15 percent rate of conversion of ecologically important lands. Estimates of conversion of ecologically important lands to development show that this indicator is losing ground. The five-year baseline rate of land cover change on the indicator land base across all 12 counties in Puget Sound for the period 2001 – 2006 was 0.28 percent and increased to 0.36 percent over the period 2006-2011.

*COMMENT: This is critical and the trend must first be stopped and then reversed. Probably only the implementation of innovative incentives could succeed here.*

Riparian restoration. The riparian vegetation restoration indicator measures the amount of vegetated cover restored along riparian corridors. Cumulatively, from 2009 to 2014, restoration of riparian vegetation has occurred along an estimated 135 linear miles of streams and rivers, about half of the 2020 target of 268 miles of riparian restoration.

*COMMENT: Surprisingly, there is no mention of the impacts of climate change on hindering the maintenance what we already have.*

Implementing the regional open space conservation plan will help move these and other indicators in the right direction.

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## **7.5 Update the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan**

This plan is a snapshot in time. It will need to be updated and improved over time as conservation in the region progresses and lessons are learned. The plan should be updated every 5 to 8 years. The focus of regular updates could include:

- Updating the regional open space network map to include updated or new and better sources of data.
- Updating the priority tools and strategies as progress is made over the short/medium term and new innovative approaches become available.
- Updating the conservation opportunities listed in Appendix A as current opportunities are addressed and better understood and new needs are identified.
- Updating protection status to track performance (ideally ongoing or yearly).

*COMMENT: Such updating is critical to keep up with an ever-changing landscape and climate.*

1 Earth Economics. Return on Natural Capital Investments. ROSS Final Strategy Report Appendix F3.

[http://openspacepugetsound.org/sites/default/files/final-report/appendices/F\\_ECOSYSTEM-SERVICE-FACT-SHEETS/Earth-Economics-Return-on-Investment-Brief.pdf](http://openspacepugetsound.org/sites/default/files/final-report/appendices/F_ECOSYSTEM-SERVICE-FACT-SHEETS/Earth-Economics-Return-on-Investment-Brief.pdf).

2 Puget Sound Partnership. 2017. Puget Sound Vital Signs.

<http://www.psp.wa.gov/vitalsigns/index.php>.