

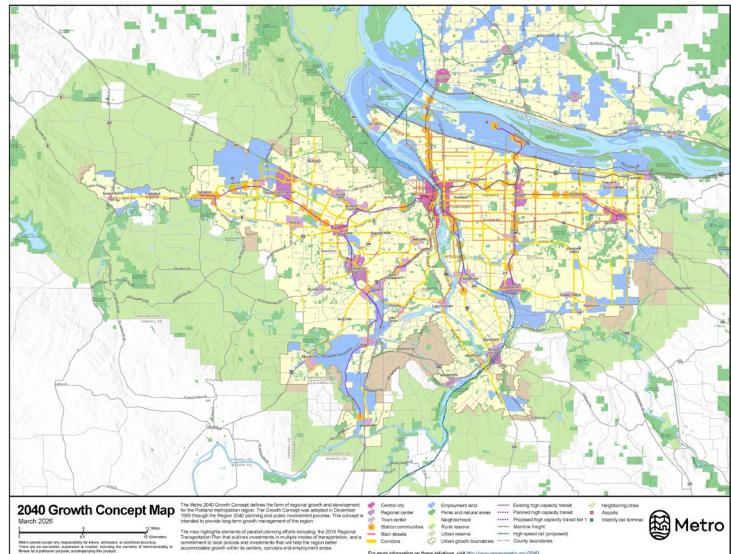
# 2040 Growth Concept Lookback

## Key Takeaways

### Overview

The 2040 Growth Concept has guided regional planning in the Portland metro area, focusing primarily on where and how growth should occur. It emphasized compact urban form, protection of rural lands, mixed-use centers, and coordination between land use and transportation. Implementation has involved Metro, local governments, and partners through policies, investments, and programs.

*One fact: The Growth Concept was ahead of its time. Metro regularly hosts delegations from China, S. Korea, Sweden, Colombia, Turkey, and Japan to learn about the Growth Concept.*



### Cross-Cutting Themes of the Lookback

While the Growth Concept has been influential in shaping development patterns, many outcomes reflect broader market forces and policy gaps. Compact growth, along with stronger implementation tools, particularly to address persistent equity challenges, remain best practices.

### Growth Management

Metro has already expanded the urban growth boundary (UGB) more than was anticipated by the year 2040. However, these expansions have been slow to produce housing and jobs. Most growth has instead occurred through redevelopment and infill, which now account for most new housing and make more efficient use of existing land and infrastructure.

*One fact: In areas added to the UGB from 1998 onward, only 12 percent of the planned housing has been built. 88 percent of the planned housing in UGB expansions remains unbuilt.*

### Housing

As with most of the U.S., regional housing supply has not kept pace with demand, contributing to affordability challenges. While the mix of housing has diversified toward multi-unit and middle housing, production remains insufficient. Housing cost burdens disproportionately affect renters, people of color, lower-income households, and those with disabilities. Displacement pressures were underestimated in the original planning framework.

*One fact: Though about half of existing housing in the UGB is single-unit detached, it represents just over a third of the new housing units built since the Growth Concept was adopted.*

## **Transportation**

The region's compact development pattern has reduced per-capita driving compared to other U.S. metropolitan areas, lowering costs and improving safety outcomes. However, transit ridership has declined over time despite investments in service. While the region benefits from integrated land use and transportation planning, gaps remain in transit and active transportation networks.

*One fact: The average person in the Metro region drives about seven fewer miles per day than elsewhere in the U.S.*

## **Climate**

While compact growth has helped reduce vehicle miles traveled and emissions, the region is not on track to meet state climate goals, including net-zero emissions by 2050. Climate impacts such as extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding are already affecting the region, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations.

*One fact: Compact growth, as envisioned in the Growth Concept, is necessary for reducing carbon emissions.*

## **Economy**

Consistent with national trends, the regional economy has shifted toward service sectors such as healthcare, while employment in manufacturing has declined. Income disparities by race and ethnicity persist and remain a key equity concern.

*One fact: There are about 28,000 fewer manufacturing jobs in the 7-county metropolitan area than there were at the time the Growth Concept was adopted. This reflects a broader national trend. Yet, we still have a larger share of employment in manufacturing than the U.S. does.*

## **Farmland**

Agriculture remains a significant contributor to the regional economy and identity, supported by rural reserves that limit urbanization. However, there has been a modest decline in farmland acreage over time, highlighting ongoing pressure on agricultural land.

*One fact: The market value of agricultural products sold in 2022 was almost one billion dollars (3-county area).*

## **Parks and Nature**

Public support for parks and natural areas has remained strong, with major investments through bonds and local programs. Metro has significantly expanded conservation efforts, and access to nature continues to be central to regional identity and quality of life.

*One fact: Metro cares for about 20,000 acres. That's the size of four Forest Parks.*