

# Regional Growth Concept Refresh

## Overview of proposed work program

### Background

Our region had the foresight 24 years ago to adopt the 2040 Growth Concept, which has helped guide how greater Portland has responded to inevitable changes in a way that reflects shared community values. The Growth Concept has served us well and its general direction of focusing most growth in well-connected centers and corridors will serve us well in the future.

When it was completed, the Growth Concept was a forward looking vision that emphasized protecting and improving our valued urban and natural areas as the population of these areas grew. This vision brought the region recognition for providing transportation choices and access to nature not seen in most large urban areas.

While there is much for the region to be proud of, there are also lessons to be learned and new ideas to consider. We must continue to be forward looking and future-focused as we refresh our regional vision. Not only must we emphasize the capital investments that this region values, we must ensure that our efforts also invest in the human capital—the people – of the region.

This effort is not intended to consider wholesale changes to the Growth Concept’s vision for where growth will occur. Those urban centers and corridors are well established through numerous policies and decades of public and private investments. Likewise, public support for protecting farms and forests is consistently strong. Compact growth remains the region’s best strategy for reducing carbon emissions from cars. Instead, this refresh of the regional vision will seek to integrate a number of newer issues and trends affecting development in our region.

### Proposed program

#### Program goals

- Show leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Advance racial equity in regional planning.
- Re-affirm what has worked in regional plans (the region’s commitment to protecting farms and forests and making the most of what we have).
- Modernize the regional vision to reflect contemporary understandings of issues that most directly relate to growth and change in the natural and built environment.
- Tackle new challenges that require regional coordination.
- Re-engage the general public in regional issues.
- Build capacity among community organizations to engage in regional issues.
- Establish a vision that goes further into the future, to the year 2070.
- Diversify and modernize Metro’s advisory committee structures.
- Update Metro’s regulatory framework as needed.
- Provide updated policy guidance that can inform public investments.

#### Program themes

Due to the interrelated nature of the 2040 Growth Concept, there are numerous topics that could be explored as part of refreshing it. Multiple project and program efforts throughout Metro are underway on their own timelines that have some relationship to implementing the current 2040 Growth Concept. The Refresh effort is not intended to disrupt or redirect existing work, but rather

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to allow Metro to update and continue its tradition of forward-looking planning that informs our region's land, transportation, parks, and economic investments over the long term.

To develop the proposed work program outline, Metro staff met informally with a range of internal and external stakeholders to seek ideas and input about what makes sense to include in a Growth Concept Refresh. From those conversations, a set of principles emerged that helped guide the recommendation that is currently before Council for consideration.

Focus on policy solutions that:

- Relate to population growth and quality of life (particularly if they are linked to community development, land use or transportation planning)
- Are best addressed at a regional scale
- Are not adequately addressed at other levels of government (federal, state or local)
- Are not adequately addressed or safeguarded by the market
- Relate to Metro's current roles
- Reaffirm upfront those topics that are not up for refresh or debate (e.g. urban and rural reserve designations, compact growth pattern).
- Allow space for public engagement activities to uncover topics that the Metro Council and staff have not considered, but should.

A refresh of the Growth Concept will synthesize a number of existing efforts and would also undertake new work. With leadership on addressing climate change and racial equity as unifying motifs, staff recommends three themes for organizing the new work elements included in this program:

- **Planning for a New Economy:** A focus on improving our understanding of disruptive economic trends to inform planning and investment and outline a more strategic approach to support a thriving regional economy – where industries and entrepreneurs flourish and workers gain access to family-wage jobs.
- **Great Places:** A focus on urban form typologies, housing opportunities, reducing carbon emissions from buildings, and access to parks and nature
- **Community Resilience:** A focus on climate change adaptation, disaster resilience, gentrification and how to build and maintain social capital

#### Planning time horizon

Staff recommend planning for the year 2070 since Metro's Charter requires that an update to the Future Vision must look out at least 50 years. Using one date for the Future Vision and the Growth Concept refresh would help to avoid confusion.

#### Scale and focus of public engagement

Staff recommend a broad-based approach to public engagement that emphasizes youth and diverse communities. Consistent with the proposed work program phasing, the bulk of public engagement would not occur until 2021 and 2022. Once the Metro Council's provides overall direction on this program, staff will review a proposed engagement strategy with Council at a later phase, closer to 2021.

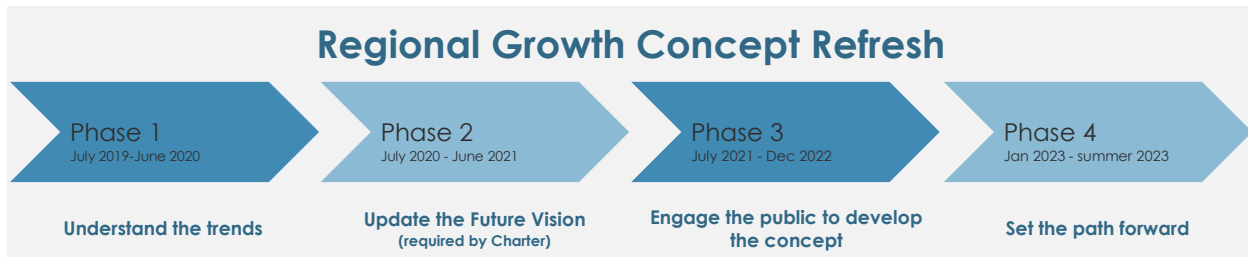
#### Program phasing

In recognition of nearer-term agency priorities and to enable broad-based public engagement, staff suggests a four-year work program that would lead to Council consideration of an updated Growth Concept in summer 2023. Regulatory updates could follow, as appropriate.

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*Note: This document focuses on initial program phases 1 and 2, through June 2021. Additional detail about program phases 3 and 4 will be developed at a later date.*



### **Phase I: Understand the trends**

#### **July 2019 – June 2020**

Staff will work with technical experts to produce background reports, Regional Snapshots, and speaker events that will inform an update to the region's plan for growth. MTAC, MPAC, and Council will all have opportunities to learn about and discuss this work as it proceeds. This work will examine racial equity, climate change, technological trends and their possible implications for regional growth. Likely topic areas include:

#### Planning for a New Economy:

- Employment trends in different sectors
- Demographic trends that influence employment growth (an aging population)
- Changes in business location choices and space usage
- Technological changes that affect work (automation, e-commerce, co-working, gig/sharing economy, virtual/augmented reality, 3D printing, micro-scale manufacturing)
- Technological changes that affect travel and movement of goods and services (telecommuting, autonomous vehicles, e-commerce, broadband service,)
- Income polarization, with a focus on racial equity and middle-income jobs

Because the Metro Council, in its 2018 growth management decision, gave more specific direction to explore these topics, staff has been working to release a request for proposals to develop a background report using the Economic Value Atlas as one source of information. Staff also intends to describe this work program to MPAC in upcoming meetings. Likewise, staff will be planning speaker events at MPAC.

#### Community Resilience:

- Likely regional impacts of a changing climate
- Climate adaptation opportunities
- Carbon reduction opportunities
- Seismic vulnerability
- The role of arts and education in building and maintaining social capital
- Civic engagement trends and best practices

Metro Planning and Development staff have begun working on some of these topics, including working with partners to update the regional emergency transportation routes map, managing the Community Placemaking Grants program, and potentially coordinating with PSU to develop regional analysis of vulnerability to flooding and extreme heat events from climate change.

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Additionally, the office of the COO recently added a limited duration position related to resilience. Planning and Development staff are coordinating with the COO office to develop work programs that complement each other.

Great Places:

- Demographic changes and implications for housing
- The relationship between housing types and urban form
- Residential development trends
- Access to parks and nature in urban areas
- Gentrification and displacement trends

The work program for these topics is in formative stages, pending Council direction.

**Phase II: Update the Future Vision**

**July 2020 – June 2021**

Background on the Future Vision

In 1995 – as required by its voter-approved Charter – the Metro Council adopted a Future Vision. The Charter states that the Future Vision “...is a conceptual statement that indicates population levels and settlement patterns that the region can accommodate within the carrying capacity of the land, water and air resources of the region, and its educational and economic resources, and that achieves a desired quality of life. The Future Vision is a long-term, visionary outlook for at least a 50-year period.” According to the Charter, the Future Vision must be updated.

An updated Future Vision will provide a foundation for updating the region’s Growth Concept. The updated Future Vision will identify a broad set of regional opportunities and challenges, providing guidance on topics that should be addressed in the update of the Growth Concept as well as identification of important issues that should be addressed in through other efforts.

Future Vision Commission

The Metro Charter requires the formation of a Future Vision Commission that recommends a Future Vision update to the Metro Council. The Metro Council may wish to designate a liaison to participate on this commission. Staff also recommends including at least one MPAC member on the commission. The Charter requires that this commission receive no compensation and include members from:

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Academic sector
- At least one member that resides outside the Metro region

Timeline

Fall 2020:	Future Vision Commission discusses background reports completed in Phase I to identify themes for the Future Vision update (MTAC, MPAC and Council will also have these opportunities).
Winter 2021:	Staff works with Commission to produce draft Future Vision update.
Spring 2021:	MTAC, MPAC, and Council provide comments on draft Future Vision update. Future Vision Commission considers comments on draft Future Vision update. Commission recommends Future Vision update to Metro Council. Metro Council considers adoption of updated Future Vision (by ordinance).

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### **Phases III and IV: Growth Concept development and adoption**

#### **Summer 2021 – summer 2023**

During spring 2021, Metro staff will seek the Metro Council's direction on a more detailed work program for phases III and IV. In Phase III, staff intends to conduct broad-based public engagement to develop an update to the Growth Concept. In Phase IV, the Metro Council would consider adoption of the updated growth concept in the summer of 2023.

Staff envisions a continuing role for the Future Vision Commission through the process of updating the Growth Concept. Draft Commission recommendations would be reviewed at MTAC, MPAC and Council.

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