Cascadia Innovation Corridor: The World's First Sustainable Mega-region

Chris Gregoire
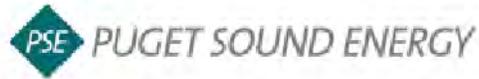
CEO, Challenge Seattle

Former Governor, Washington State

Challenge Seattle members

Challenge Seattle's areas of focus

CASCADIA INNOVATION CORRIDOR

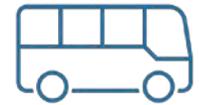Building on the shared strengths of the Cascadia mega-region

EDUCATION

Establishing a world-class workforce right here at home

MIDDLE-INCOME HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Protecting the health, vibrancy, & diversity of our communities

TRANSPORTATION

Sparking innovative solutions that keep our region moving

Cascadia Innovation Corridor

STEERING COMMITTEE

Initiative CEOs:

Chris Gregoire
CEO Challenge Seattle &
Former Governor, WA State

Greg D'Avignon
CEO Business Council of
British Columbia

Best & Diverse Talent

Efficient Cross-Border Movement

Life Sciences

Sustainability

Transformative Technologies

Higher Education Research Excellence

Transportation, Housing, & Connectivity

Our Vision: Cascadia 2035

Cascadia is recognized as a global center of innovation. We compete economically, empower our communities to thrive, tackle the most persistent societal problems in our region and share our success with the world.
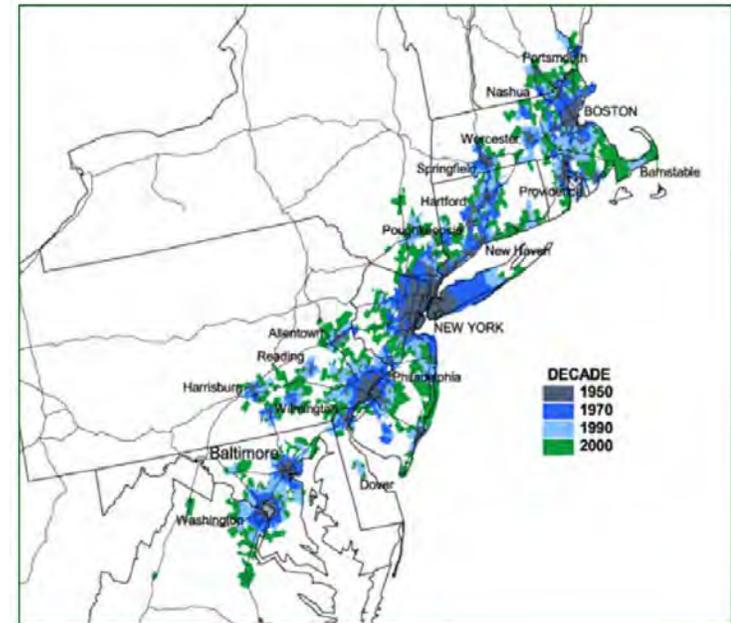
Mega-regions: today's economic powerhouses

29 mega-regions globally, 11 in North America. Together, they represent $3.6T in annual economic output

Cascadia mega-region:

- Connects Portland, OR, Seattle, WA, and Vancouver, BC
- $72,804 GDP per capita
- 9.1 million people
- 30% population growth 2000-2020

Characteristics of a Mega-Region

1. Contain at least two existing metro areas
2. Population over 5 million
3. GDP over $300 billion

Population & urbanized area growth of the NY-Bos-Wash mega-region 1950 - 2000

Today's high-growth mega-regions, including Cascadia, suffer from similar challenges

Lack of Affordable Housing

>50%

Percentage of Cascadia residents who are housing cost-burdened[1]

Severe Traffic Congestion

11.1 days

Time the average commuter in Cascadia spends on the road each year[2]

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

4.1 Million

Metric tons of CO_2e emitted by single-occupancy vehicles in Cascadia each year[3]

1. U.S. Census Bureau; Real Estate Board of Vancouver; Statistics Canada
2.
3. Estimated using Data IO (US Census) and Statistics Canada measurements for percentage of single occupancy commuting vehicles

Other mega-regions prove traditional patterns of growth don't solve the problem

Build "up" through increased densification

+ **Reduced greenhouse gas emissions**
Ex: The Bay Area has emissions 12% below Cascadia[1]

– **Increased housing costs**
Ex: Median home prices in the Bay Area are 8.5x median income[2]

OR

Build "out" through increased sprawl

+ **Reduced housing costs**
Ex: Median home prices in the Texas Triangle[3] are 3.5x median income[4]

– **Increased greenhouse gas emissions**
Ex: Emissions in the Texas Triangle are 2x per capita the levels in Cascadia[5]

1. US Census; https://www.citylab.com/life/2012/04/which-us-cities-tend-be-greenest/860/
2. US Census
3. Texas Triangle = mega-region connecting Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, TX
4. US Census

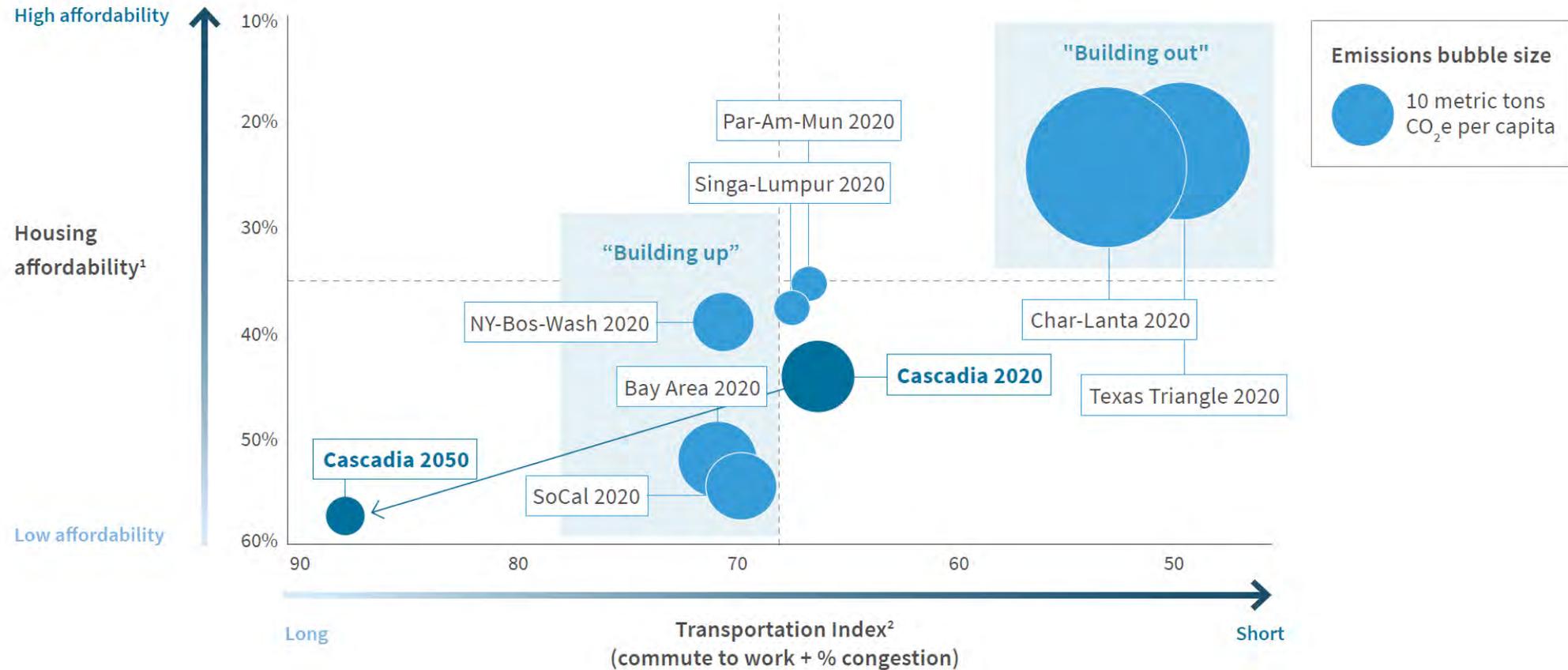# Estimated population growth proves we need to think bigger

3-4 Million

Estimated increase in population in Cascadia by 2050

1.5M

into our existing urban cores through increased densification

800,000

into our existing mid-sized cities through increased densification

1.3M

unaccounted for by current capacity – the equivalent of **two** Vancouver, BC 's
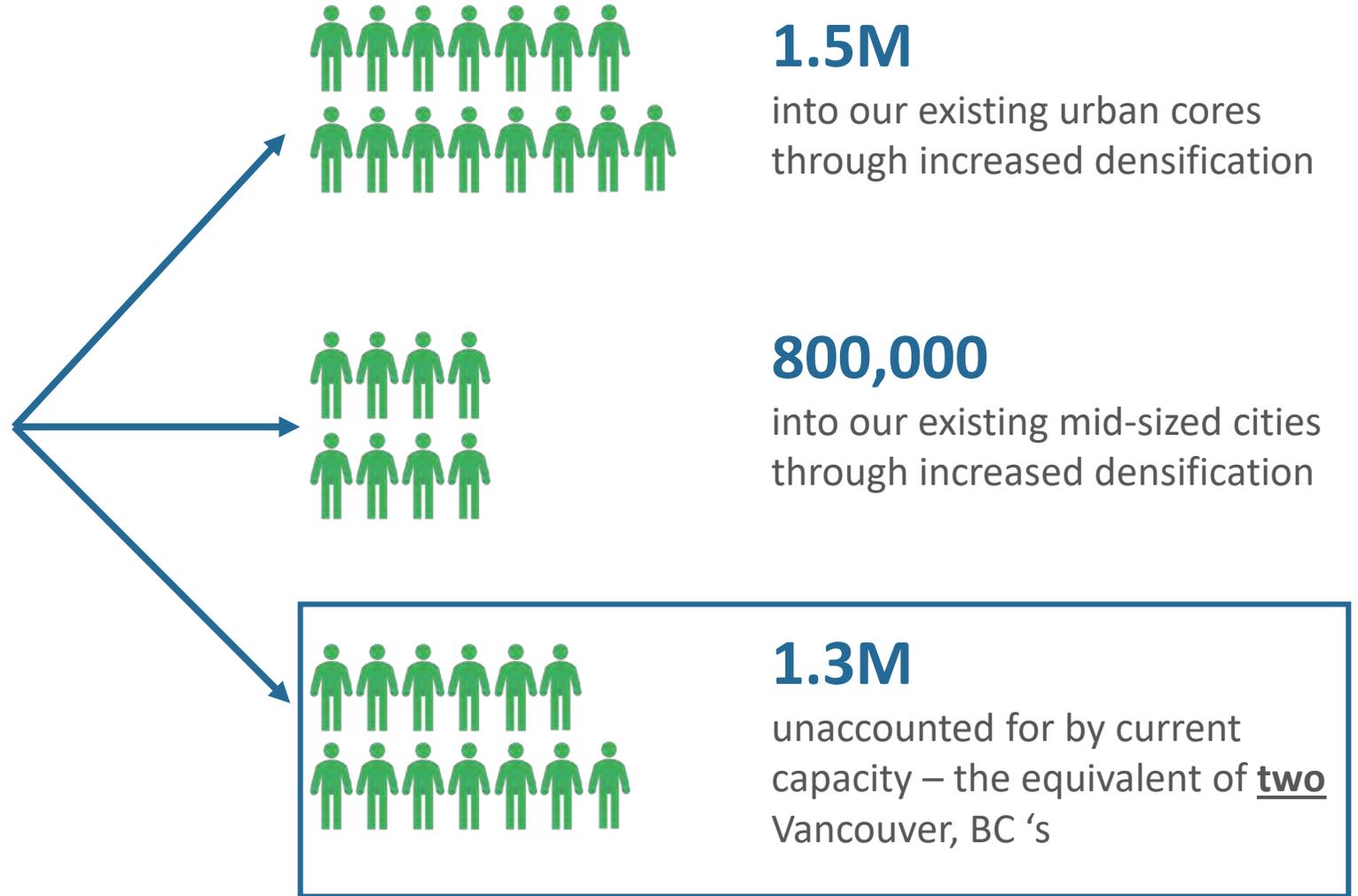
Without big changes, accommodating population growth dramatically worsens existing challenges

We need big, bold ideas if we are to create a sustainable mega-region

Housing & Development:
median housing cost is ≤30% of median income

Transportation:
projected population growth absorbed without an increase in traffic congestion

Environmental Stewardship:
Reduce CO_2e emissions by 80%, meeting Paris Climate Accord targets

Cascadia can become an example to the world as the first sustainable mega-region

1. **Densify current urban centers**

2. **Grow existing mid-size cities**

3. **Build new "hub" cities**

4. **Connect it all via Ultra Highspeed Transportation & broadband**

Building new "hub" cities is not a new idea

Brazos Valley, TX

Forest City, Malaysia

COVID disruption provides a new opportunity to embrace this concept

74%

Of companies plan to permanently shift to more remote work post-COVID[4]

77%

Of executives say allowing employees to work remotely may lead to lower operating costs[3]
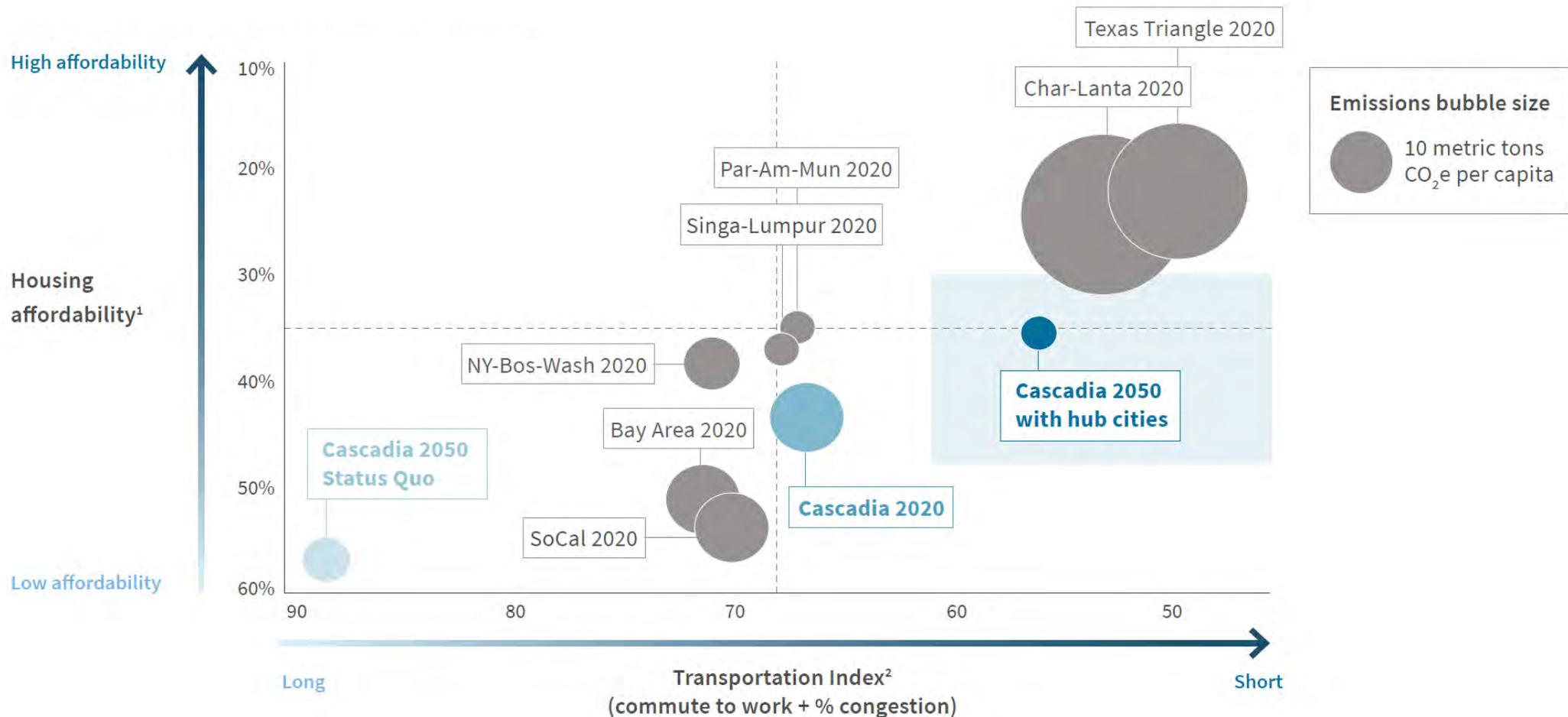
35% - 40%

Increase in productivity for remote workers v. those in corporate offices[2]

17%

Reduction in daily global greenhouse gas emissions Jan-April 2020 vs. 2019 levels[5]

1. Gartner, What CIOs Need to Know About Managing Remote and Virtual Teams through the COVID-19 Crisis
2. Gartner, How to Cultivate Effective "Remote Work" Programs, 2019
3. https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/remote-work-statistics/
4. Gartner, COVID-19 Bulletin: Executive Pulse, 3 April 2020
5. https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/19/world/carbon-emissions-coronavirus-pandemic-scn-climate-trnd/index.html

Our plan would reverse Cascadia's current path toward unaffordability and congestion

High affordability

Housing affordability[1]

Low affordability

Emissions bubble size
10 metric tons CO_2e per capita

Texas Triangle 2020

Char-Lanta 2020

Par-Am-Mun 2020

Singa-Lumpur 2020

NY-Bos-Wash 2020

Cascadia 2050 with hub cities

Bay Area 2020

Cascadia 2050 Status Quo

Cascadia 2020

SoCal 2020

Long

Short

Transportation Index[2]
(commute to work + % congestion)

Ultra Highspeed Transportation study and planning underway

- Phase 1: Feasibility Study – completed December 2017
  - Highlights:
    - $24-$42B capital costs
    - Potential to cover operating and maintenance costs as early as 2035

- Phase 2: Business Case Analysis – completed July 2019
  - Highlights:
    - $156-$300M estimated annual revenues by 2040;
    - $355B estimated additional economic activity generated;
    - Reduce emissions by 6M metric tons over 40 years

- Phase 3: Governance, financing, and engagement plans development
  - Under contract with report due December 1, 2020.
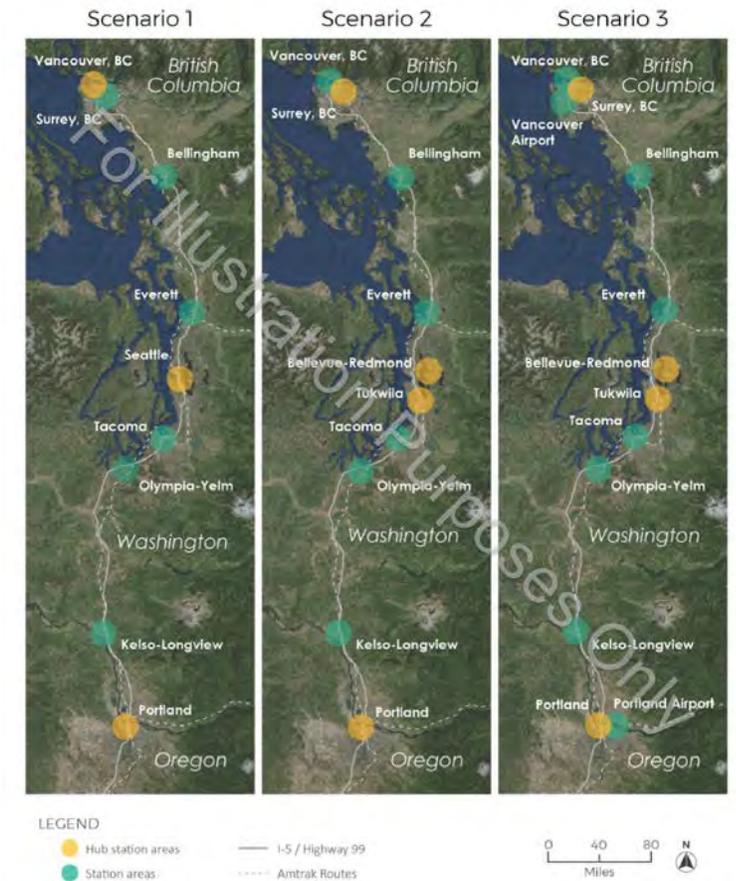
Jointly funded by Washington, British Columbia, Oregon, and Microsoft

Highspeed transportation and broadband connectivity are at the core of this vision

Working together, we can make Cascadia the world's first sustainable mega-region