March 10, 2014

Amy Ho
Puget Sound Regional Council
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98104-1035

Dear Ms. Ho,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the update to Puget Sound Regional Council’s Transportation 2040 plan. A strong, interconnected multimodal system that provides for the efficient movement of goods and people is a top priority for the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, and we are pleased to see that the T2040 plan advances that goal.

We applaud the inclusion of prioritization measures in this update. Incorporating a clear link to VISION 2040 ensures that transportation investments advance our regional growth plan and improves the consistency of our region’s planning efforts. In regard to the specific priorities listed, we agree that freight and jobs are two important metrics to consider, and understand that the list of priorities reflects those of VISION 2040. However, we believe that connection between transportation investments and our economy can be made more clear and recommend making a more explicit linkage between the investment plan and the Prosperity Partnership’s activities.

We also appreciate the commitment to preservation and maintenance in the plan. Keeping our region’s existing transportation infrastructure and assets—including transit assets—in a strong functional state protects the investments we have already made and is vital to our safety and long-term competitiveness. Fully understanding the costs associated with our region’s preservation needs is also essential, particularly as local municipalities plan for their own transportation investments.

As PSRC enters the next iteration of updates to the T2040 plan, we strongly encourage the incorporation of improved freight mobility planning, particularly since the Regional Freight Strategy has not been updated with new data or other changes this time. Freight mobility is at the crux of our region’s competitiveness as a global gateway for trade. More than 533 million tons of freight were moved in Washington in 2010, and that number is expected to grow by up to 86 percent by 2040 — if traffic congestion and poor infrastructure do not prevent that growth. With 40 percent of jobs in our state tied to international trade, we must make sure that our region’s transportation planning supports the vitality of this key industry.

We also encourage the inclusion of the future transit network, currently listed as another potential element. Including this issue along with improved freight mobility planning in the 2018 update will ensure that the T2040 plan reflects a more current transportation landscape, a necessary attribute for a document that serves as a touchstone for regional consideration of investments.

Sincerely,

Amy Grotenfendt
Co-Chair
Transportation Task Force

Richard White
Co-Chair
Transportation Task Force