

Transportation 2040

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is the purpose of Transportation 2040?

The purpose of Transportation 2040 is to support and implement VISION 2040 and the Regional Economic Strategy. The plan represents a major step forward in providing the mobility required to support a growing population to the year 2040, sustainably address the region's environmental, economic, transportation, safety and overall quality of life objectives.

The plan is a framework that guides future regional decisions, presents the region's vision to federal and state policy-makers, and paves the way for the implementation of key regional projects and programs. The plan is intended to be strategic and flexible in order to respond to evolving local, regional, state and national policies and priorities.

What big issues is the plan taking on?

VISION 2040 Integration: For the first time, the region's transportation plan is fully integrated with the region's long range multicounty growth management policies and its regional economic strategy through the year 2040.

Better Data. The planning process has used innovative new models to provide improved information about the relationship between transportation and land use, as well as regional and subarea benefits and costs of different mixes of investments.

Mobility. Transportation 2040 has been designed to support and provide services to those parts of the region where we expect to grow the most. The plan emphasizes providing transportation choices and management systems that reduce the need for roadway expansion while improving freight and people movement in the region. Transportation 2040 will serve and link vibrant regional and local centers and manufacturing areas with a wide variety of transportation choices.

Environment. Transportation 2040 is the first plan of its kind to support national and state efforts by developing a comprehensive 4-part greenhouse gas reduction strategy that demonstrates progress in stabilizing and reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and it calls for retrofitting aging infrastructure to minimize impacts to Puget Sound.

Transportation Finance. The plan introduces an entirely new sustainable approach to transportation finance, moving the region away from diminishing traditional sources and toward an increased connection between transportation users and fees.

How is the plan integrated with VISION 2040?

VISION 2040 provides the long range regional policy framework for Transportation 2040 with regional guidance for the environment, development patterns, housing, the economy, transportation and public services.

VISION 2040 says transportation investments should support the pattern of growth and development described in the Regional Growth Strategy, which provides guidance for how the region can accommodate the addition of 1.5 million people and 1.2 million jobs by the year 2040.

The growth strategy calls for the largest cities to accommodate a majority of this growth: 53% of population growth and 71% of employment growth are targeted to *Metropolitan Cities* and *Core Cities*. Transportation 2040 is a multimodal transportation system that provides a variety of choices, designed to support the Regional Growth Strategy.

System Design

- The full plan contains approximately 85 miles of new light rail, building a fast and frequent regional high capacity transit system that links our major regional growth centers. The financially constrained plan contains nearly 80 miles of new light rail.
- The regional transit system uses regional growth centers within Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities as a framework: Link light rail will serve 12 regional growth centers, including all four east sound Metropolitan Cities. Sounder commuter rail will serve nine regional growth centers, and ST regional express bus will serve 15 regional growth centers.
- 87% of the full plan's highway and roadway investments are within or directly serve Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities. 69% of highway and roadway investments in the constrained plan serve these geographies.
- Regional guidance calls for new local transit to be focused on providing frequent service in urban areas, and to and between local and regional centers in major travel corridors. New service should be focused in locations that will best support productive routes and that will optimize local transit service delivery, promote convenient transfers between transit and other travel modes, serve local needs and feed the high capacity system.
- Bicycle and pedestrian projects are prioritized for regional growth centers, facilities with one terminus in a center, or serving of transit passenger facilities. The constrained plan contains 348 miles of new off-road regional trails.

Analysis

- Forecasts from the region's land use model show that Transportation 2040 supports:
 - Focusing approximately 97% of growth within designated Urban Growth Areas.
 - Continued development of regional growth centers: by 2040, we'll add over 173,000 people and 475,000 new jobs in our regional growth centers, more than double their current activity.
- Benefit-cost analysis shows that the plan will provide the highest average per trip benefits for all trips originating within centers. These high per trip benefits indicate a competitive advantage for centers development when compared to the rest of the region.

How does the plan support a thriving regional economy?

Transportation is extremely important to economic growth and prosperity. The mix of investments in the plan have been demonstrated to produce tangible benefits to people and freight in terms of travel time savings, improved travel reliability, and better choices. Our analysis shows the region's freight users will derive significant travel benefits from the investments included in the plan. In addition, our analysis shows the region's 15 industry clusters (which include information technology, life sciences, aerospace, logistics

and international trade, and eleven others) will realize significant benefits from the plan's projects and programs. The plan will support our growing economy and keep it healthy. A strong economy is essential to achieving other regional objectives, including creating vibrant urban places, providing economic opportunities to all citizens, and making investments in the preservation of our unique regional environment.

In addition, the plan recognizes the need to secure transportation funding that does not unnecessarily burden the economy. By having the users of the transportation system pay for the investments, Transportation 2040 will help the region build a sustainable financial framework for transportation investments and guarantee that we can get the most out of our transportation improvements.

How does the plan improve mobility?

Transportation 2040 recognizes that improving mobility will require a combination of preserving our existing transportation system, efficiency improvements and strategic investments in transportation choices and roadway capacity. Strategic capacity investments are particularly important in urban centers and in providing efficient transportation between centers. Capacity supporting the movement of freight and goods is also important to support the regional economy.

Are maintenance, preservation and operation emphasized?

Transportation 2040 says maintenance, preservation and operation of existing transportation assets should be prioritized before investing in new capacity.

- 58% of Transportation 2040's plan investments are prioritized for maintenance, preservation and operation of existing facilities.
- This includes major bridge project replacements, extensive highway rehabilitation and resurfacing, and making sure we continue to provide critical transit service to meet the region's travel needs.

How does the plan promote efficiency?

Transportation 2040 says efficiency should be prioritized before capacity investments.

- Transportation 2040 is designed around 12 "Smart Corridors" where investments will focus on advanced technology, user information, demand management programs, and variable pricing on tolled facilities.
- Transportation 2040 emphasizes greatly expanded employer and residential programs to reduce travel demand and increase use of transit, vanpools, bicycling, and walking.
- The plan contains an aggressive program of advanced technology on arterials and freeways, including better signal coordination, active traffic management, new and expanded traveler information services, and transit-specific technologies to ensure on-time performance and better inform customers.

Does the plan emphasize transportation choices?

Transportation 2040 says transportation investments should emphasize projects and programs that improve mobility and provide additional choices other than single occupant vehicle travel.

- More than 50% of Transportation 2040 investments in the financially constrained plan are for regional and local transit, representing a near doubling in local transit service (a 90% increase). The plan would increase peak hour transit service by up to 120% from today.
- The plan contains up to 85 miles of new light rail.

- In addition to bicycle and pedestrian projects supporting centers and transit passenger facilities, Transportation 2040 contains approximately 348 miles of off-road regional bicycle trails, with the potential for an additional 305 miles with additional resources.
- A total of 4,300 Vanpools in 2040, an expansion of 151%.

What roadway investments are in the plan?

VISION 2040 policies call for improving the safety of the roadway system and reducing negative effects of transportation infrastructure. They also promote connecting the urban grid of local streets, and providing for walking, bicycling and transit use. Greater connectivity provides more opportunity for active transportation, and greater health benefits. Regional policies state that the construction of major new roads and significant expansion of existing roads in rural and resource areas should be avoided if possible. Where rural projects are necessary, strict land use controls and access management should be in place to prevent unplanned levels of growth in rural and resource areas.

- Transportation 2040 reduces the total number of highway projects compared to previous plans, while adding 10 years of growth in the region's population (an additional 500,000 people). The plan proposes to use tolls to finance new highways and better manage their use.
- More than half the plan's highway investment is associated with maintenance and operations, as well as major preservation projects, such as highway rehabilitation and resurfacing, and the replacement of the SR 520 Bridge and Alaskan Way Viaduct.
- In the full plan, 87% of highway and roadway investments are in — or directly serve — Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities. In the financially constrained plan, 69% of highway and roadway investments are in or directly serve Metropolitan Cities and Core Cities.
- Roadway projects were evaluated for consistency with VISION 2040. Criteria considered whether the project: was in the UGA, had access controls (if located in the rural area), included transit supportive infrastructure (arterial transit lanes, HOV lanes, HOT lanes), accommodated bicycles and pedestrians, supported priority freight routes, improved safety.

Does the plan reduce greenhouse gases?

Transportation 2040 commits the region to support federal and state efforts to reduce overall production of harmful elements that contribute to climate change, and to comply with state initiatives and directives regarding the reduction of greenhouse gases. State goals call for overall statewide emissions levels to be 25% below 1990 levels by 2035 (the goal closest to the Transportation 2040 planning horizon).

- Transportation 2040 lays out a 4-part greenhouse gas reduction strategy, based on Land Use, Transportation Pricing, Transportation Choices, and improved vehicle and fuel Technology.
- The strategy is flexible, designed to incorporate guidance that may be developed regarding emissions reductions specific to the region and the transportation sector.
- Analysis shows that with aggressive implementation, the strategy has the potential to reduce regional greenhouse gases associated with transportation by up to 28% below 2006 levels. These results show that Transportation 2040 is on the right track to providing regional solutions for regional greenhouse gas reduction associated with transportation.

Does the plan reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT)?

With its emphasis on providing additional transportation choices, VMT reduction is one of the four cornerstones of both the greenhouse gas reduction strategy and the mobility strategy at the heart of Transportation 2040.

- The state benchmarks adopted in 2008 call for a statewide 18% reduction in per capita VMT by 2020, 30% by 2035, and 50% by 2050, based on a forecasted 2020 baseline. Analysis of the financially-constrained plan compared to that benchmark shows a 32% per capita VMT reduction, and 33% for the entire plan by 2040.
- Additional analysis of the plan has shown a regional per capita VMT reduction of between 14-16% compared to regional per capita VMT in 2006.
- The regional transportation demand model has limited sensitivity to some of the major programs contained in the plan, such as aggressive TDM strategies and the availability of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Additional per capita VMT reduction is expected in response to implementation of these programs.

Does the plan address Puget Sound water quality?

The state is currently involved in an effort to assure the health of Puget Sound. Recent surveys have indicated this goal needs to be a top priority for environmental considerations related to transportation.

- The plan emphasizes focused urban investments and the retrofit of existing infrastructure to address water quality of the region's streams, lakes, rivers, and Puget Sound.

What's the financial strategy?

Transportation 2040 promotes transportation financing methods, such as user fees and tolls that will sustain maintenance, preservation and operation of facilities and reflect the costs imposed by users.

- The plan recommends a phased financial strategy based on transitioning away from current gas taxes and other traditional transportation revenue sources. The Transportation 2040 financial strategy calls for moving toward the implementation of new user fees, including tolls. The region will also explore a fuel tax replacement, such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT) charges, and other pricing approaches to fund and manage the transportation system. The financial strategy assumes a nexus between the tax, fee, or toll and the use of the revenues.
- It is assumed the strategy of implementing tolls will start with developing high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, and tolling individual highway and bridge facilities in their entirety as they are implemented. The plan also gave guidance for the strategy to remain flexible and accelerate the implementation of tolls earlier than 2020 wherever feasible.

Does the plan consider equity?

Transportation 2040 says that transportation should be provided for a wide variety of users including those who simply do not want to drive, seniors who no longer have licenses, people with disabilities who depend on transit or other transportation services, lower-income people who cannot afford a car, and children under the driving age. Programs and projects should be implemented in ways that prevent or minimize negative impacts to low-income, minority, and special needs populations.

- Transportation 2040 was designed to provide a multimodal transportation system to accommodate all user groups.
- Equity of benefits and performance was evaluated both region-wide and by subarea, including in areas with high concentrations of low-income and minority households, and to different user types (SOV, HOV, Transit, Freight).
- The analysis showed the selected plan will produce higher net benefits for low income and minority households than other alternatives considered
- On a per trip basis, benefits to transit users, HOV users and freight operators were significantly higher than benefits to SOVs users.

For more information

Full documentation of analysis supporting the development of Transportation 2040 is available at <http://www.psrc.org/transportation/t2040>.

If you have difficulties accessing any information or have additional questions, please contact:

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