Growing Transit Communities: A Corridor Action Strategy for the Central Puget Sound Region will help local communities make the most of major new transit investments that will be built over the next 20 years. The goal is to provide all people the choice to live in affordable, vibrant, healthy and safe communities, where they can conveniently walk or take a train or a bus to work, and have good access to services, shopping and other activities.

The Puget Sound Regional Council is coordinating a regional partnership joining cities, housing authorities, counties, public health agencies, affordable housing advocates, educational institutions and development interests to create an Affordable Housing Strategy as part of Growing Transit Communities. An Affordable Housing Steering Committee will represent those interests, gain agreement on common, equitable transit community principles, advise staff on related issues, and oversee work elements.

The goal of the strategy is to provide housing options at all-income levels near existing and future transit stations. As part of the task work, the strategy will present recommendations and create tools to help overcome barriers to constructing and maintaining affordable housing near transit stations. These tools will be available to local governments to encourage housing diversity and promote affordability.

Tasks to be undertaken by the Affordable Housing Strategy:

- Identify local policies and financial tools to encourage different types of housing along light rail corridors, which can be tailored to local market conditions, community characteristics, and each community’s vision for the future.

- Review effectiveness and document findings of tax increment financing (TIF) tools in Washington. Explore and document alternatives (with legislators, community stakeholders, jurisdictions) for affordable housing and economic development.
• Research and document structure, legal authority, requirements and procedures of proposed Regional Transit-Oriented Development Property Acquisition Fund for Affordable Housing.

• Identify and document legal and system barriers to providing public surplus land as a priority and/or at a discount for affordable housing and develop strategies to make the necessary changes to overcome these obstacles. Work with public agencies to develop public surplus land model policies that address activities requiring land acquisition for transit stations, rights-of-way, and maintenance facilities.

• Conduct a regional analysis of fair housing and equity assessment to identify and assess fair housing and equity issues at a regional scale. Outline any necessary strategies to ensure major investments in housing, transportation, employment, infrastructure (e.g., stormwater and water treatment), and education are aligned with fair housing goals.

• Expand PSRC’s Housing Innovations Program and provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions on planning and incentives for transit-oriented development and affordable housing.

• Research and explore innovative mechanisms to encourage production or incentivize preservation of affordable housing near transit stations.

For more information:
Please visit psrc.org or contact Dan Landes at 206-971-3287 or dlandes@psrc.org

To get a picture of where and which transit stations the Growing Transit Communities program will be focusing efforts, please visit: http://www.psrc.org/growth/growing-transit-communities

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