REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2026–2050

FUTURE SYSTEM REPORT

May 2026

Puget Sound Regional Council

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Future Transportation System Report

The transportation system in the central Puget Sound region is an integrated, multimodal network encompassing infrastructure and programs that move people and goods throughout the region every day. People and businesses make choices regarding the mode of travel they will use for each and every trip they take, based on a variety of factors such as travel time and available options. In many cases, multiple modes are selected for any given trip purpose, so the system must provide seamless and reliable connections to get people where they need to go as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The Current Transportation System Report provides details on all the various elements that together provide an integrated and multimodal transportation network throughout the entire region. This includes:

- Local and regional transit services, including bus, rail and ferry
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities and amenities
- Air travel for both people and goods
- Freight networks that move goods from where they come into the region to where they are going, via truck, rail, ship and air
- Streets and highways that serve as the underpinning of the system for multiple modes, from people driving but also for buses, trucks, and those who walk, bike or roll
- Traffic signals and other equipment that support efficient movement on the system, and transportation demand management programs that educate and encourage the use of modes other than driving alone

The Current Transportation System Report describes each element of the system in operation today, including an inventory of the available facilities and services, key data and trends, and where applicable a high-level summary of identified gaps in the system. These gaps are derived from where people and jobs are today throughout the region compared to where facilities and services are located. Information on the current transportation system, as well as contextual information such as demographics, the regional High Injury Network and other layers, may also be viewed in the Current Transportation System Visualization Tool.

Work is underway to develop the next long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), identifying planned investments of the transportation system out to 2050. This system is designed to support growth in population and employment into the future, and address many of the gaps identified on the current system. This report provides information on these planned investments across all the system elements identified above, resulting from over a year's worth of work and coordination with PSRC's local, regional and state partner agencies

as well as extensive outreach and engagement with members of the public.

Four plan investment scenarios were thoroughly discussed and analyzed by PSRC's advisory committees and boards, as well as during six regional public meetings held in the fall. Details of these scenarios are provided on the RTP Engagement Hub. One scenario was identified as the preferred scenario moving forward, and those investments are described in this report as the future transportation system in the draft Regional Transportation Plan.

Summaries of key system performance results and potential remaining gaps in the future transportation system are also provided in this report. In addition, information may be viewed in the Future Transportation System Visualization Tool. Many more details will be provided in the Draft Regional Transportation Plan, which will be released for public review and comment between mid-December and February 2026.

Please note that roadway safety and maintenance and preservation will be addressed in separate documents as part of the Draft Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, a thorough assessment of safety was conducted in the Regional Safety Action Plan. The draft plan will also contain more details on additional topics and system elements such as climate, health, active transportation and others.

Section 1: The Regional Transit Network and Services

There are numerous and varied elements to the system of public transportation in operation throughout the region. These include fixed route bus, rail and ferry networks; on-demand services; and programs and services provided for people with mobility challenges. In addition, there are bus and rail services that connect the region to other places. This system of public transportation – provided by multiple agencies - is a network of services that provide connections within the region but also to other parts of the state and around the country. Connecting to air and marine transportation further provides connections around the world.

Highlights of the planned future system for each of these elements is described in the sections below.

Section 1A: Fixed Route Transit Services

By 2050, significant expansion of regional and local transit service is planned. The future transit system will include 116 miles of light rail, extending its reach from Everett to Tacoma, Ballard and West Seattle communities within Seattle, and connecting South Kirkland to Issaquah. It will double the number of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes from 11 to 22, adding service along the I-405 and SR-522 corridors, connecting communities in King and Snohomish counties from as far north as Arlington and as far south as Auburn, and extending east to Totem Lake. In addition, Sounder commuter rail will be extended south to

DuPont. Specific investments are described further in the Regional Capacity Projects list and can be viewed in the Future Transportation System Visualization Tool.

These high-capacity transit service investments will be supported by local transit service that will grow on average two percent each year through 2050. Key supporting local transit service includes more than double the number of routes that provide all day or frequent (or both) service compared to today, covering areas that have grown the most in all four counties.

System Performance: Key Trends and Findings

The substantial expansion of transit networks and service hours described above will result in an additional 205 routes operating throughout the region and a 90% increase in transit service hours compared to the current system. This investment will result in a tripling of transit boardings across the region, compared to today's levels.

By 2050 more people are expected to use transit for their daily travel needs, not just commuting to work, as the transit system across the region will include more all-day and frequent services. These types of routes can serve a wider variety of trip purposes as well as jobs that begin and end at times outside the traditional commute hours.

Transit Supportive Densities and Service

As described in the Current Transportation System Report, the mode and quality of transit service relies heavily upon the land use context in which it operates. Table 1 illustrates the four different categories of transit service based on the frequency and span of service (i.e., the amount of time between when service starts and ends each day) and the corresponding densities of people and jobs that will support those service levels.

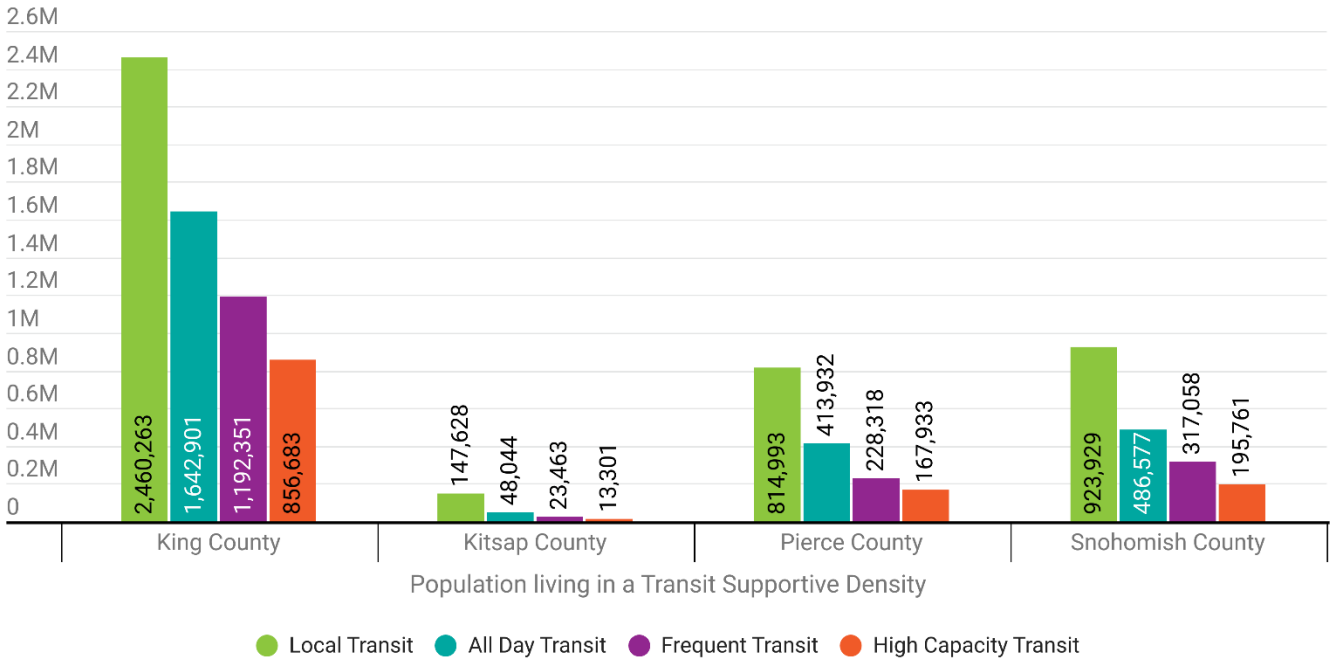
Table 1: Transit Service & Transit-Supportive Densities

Density	Frequency & Span	Transit Service
At least 7 people + jobs per acre	Service with at least 2 trips per hour between 6am and 8pm	Local Transit
At least 15 people + jobs per acre	Service with at least 3 trips per hour between 5am and 10pm	All Day Service
At least 25 people + jobs per acre	Service with at least 4 trips per hour between 6am and 6pm	Frequent Service
At least 40 people + jobs per acre	BRT, Light Rail, Commuter Rail or Ferry at varying frequencies and spans	High-Capacity Transit

There are additional, more limited services provided outside the four types identified in the table above. Any local transit service with fewer than two trips per hour between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm is classified as "Limited Transit."

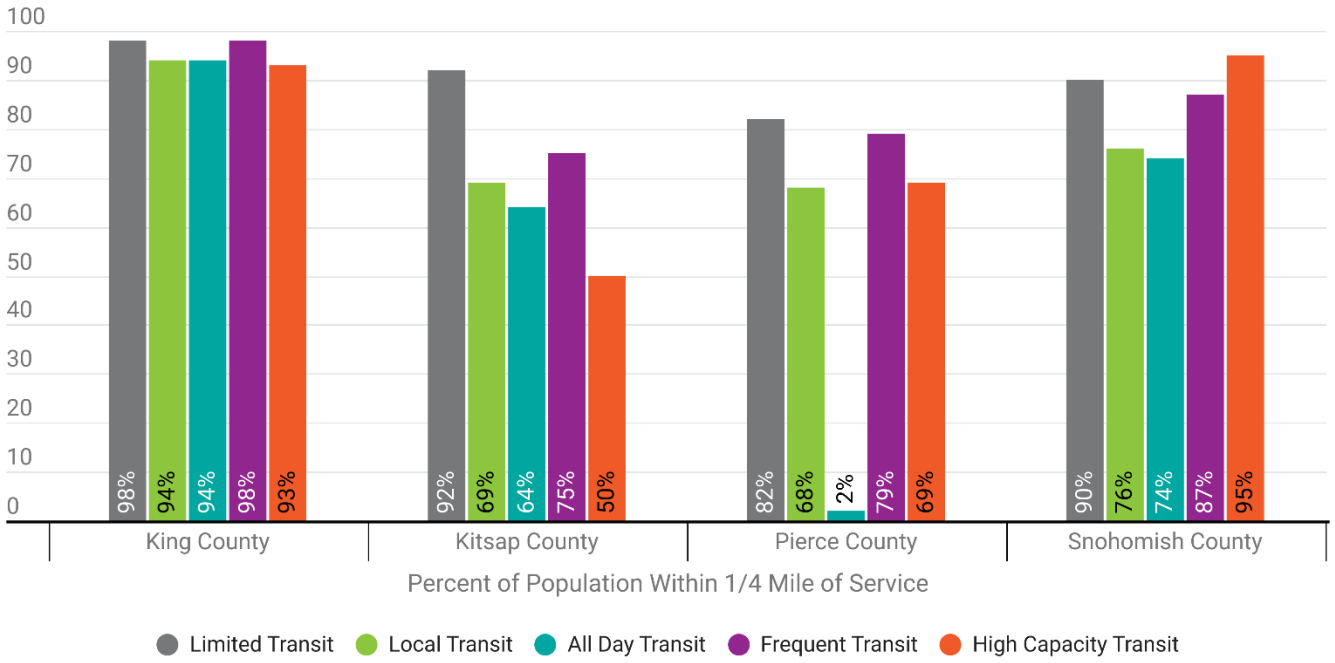
By 2050, a much larger portion of the region will live and work in these areas than today. This is directly correlated with implementation of the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy and the focus of future growth in housing and jobs in regional growth centers and high-capacity transit station areas. As transit agencies expand All-Day, Frequent, and High-Capacity transit services in areas with higher growth rates for people and jobs, those transit service types serve a larger percentage of the region's population in 2050 compared to today.

Figure 1: 2050 Estimated Population in Transit Supportive Densities by County



Source: PSRC model results (October 2025).

Figure 2: 2050 Population and Transit Service Types by County



Source: PSRC model results (October 2025)

The following section describes the gaps in service for transit supportive densities across the region as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Transit Service Gaps in 2050

Service Type	Regional	King	Kitsap	Pierce	Snohomish
Local Transit	15%	5%	31%	31%	23%
All Day Transit	25%	6%	36%	98%	26%
Frequent Transit	6%	1%	25%	21%	12%
High-Capacity Transit	10%	7%	49%	31%	5%

Local Transit

Local Transit provides a lower frequency and shorter span of service than other regularly scheduled transit service types. Today, 33% of people living or working in areas that meet the minimum density threshold do not have this level of service provided. By 2050, this gap will drop to approximately 15%.

All Day Transit

All Day Transit provides service outside of traditional peak commute hours, allowing people to access destinations throughout the day and later in the evening, as well as providing more coverage for jobs such as retail and shift work that require commutes in the evening or early mornings. Today, approximately 36% of the region's population lives or works in areas that meet the minimum density threshold that would support All Day Transit but do not have that service. By 2050 that number drops to 25%.

Frequent Transit

Frequency is an important quality of service that provides more freedom for people using transit to just show up and go without reliance upon a schedule. Areas with more frequent transit service support higher densities of people living car-free or car-light lifestyles envisioned in the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy. Today, 11% of the region's population lives or work in an area meeting the minimum density threshold to support frequent transit but lack that service. By 2050 that number drops to 6%.

High-Capacity Transit

By 2050, extensive buildout of the region's high-capacity transit network will be complete across three of the four counties. Expansion of passenger-only ferry services, described in Section 1B, will further extend and connect high-capacity transit through all four counties. Today, approximately 16% of the region's population lives or works in areas that meet the minimum density threshold but do not have high-capacity transit service. This gap decreases to 10% of the region by 2050.[1]

Additional System Gap Analyses

Similar analyses of these four levels of transit service were conducted for the region's six equity focus areas. These areas see larger decreases in transit service gaps in some important areas:

- In the current transportation system, people of color have a slightly higher gap (12%) in Frequent Transit service compared to the region as a whole (11%). By 2050, people of color are projected to have a smaller gap in this type of transit service (4%) compared to the region (6%).

[1] High-Capacity transit service includes commuter rail, light rail, ferries and bus rapid transit services. These routes may also be considered Frequent or All Day services, but for the purposes of this analysis are included in this category to avoid double counting.

- All equity focus areas in the region see decreases in transit service gaps for All-Day Transit service. For example, the gap for people with low incomes is reduced from 38% today to 27% by 2050.

In summary, by 2050 significant improvements in transit service and coverage are being planned, serving much of the growth in population and jobs anticipated within this timeframe. Even with this level of investment, however, some gaps in service will remain across all four types of transit operations. The Regional Transportation Plan calls for continued work into the future to address these and other ongoing system needs.

Section 1B: Ferries

The Current Transportation System Report provides information on the current multimodal and passenger only ferry system, including key challenges and trends. The draft Regional Transportation Plan identifies significant planned investments in the ferry system through 2050, reflecting both preservation and maintenance needs as well as system expansion and innovation.

Washington State Ferries Fleet

The Washington State Ferries (WSF) has a fleet of 21 multimodal ferries, over half of which are over 30 years old and five over 50 years old. Significant efforts have been underway on replacement plans and conversion to hybrid-electric ferries in recent years. By 2040 WSF plans to:

- Build 16 new hybrid electric ferries
- Electrify 11 ferry terminals to charge the hybrid electric vessels
- Electrify up to 6 existing vessels

This will increase their fleet size from 21 to 26 vessels and allow for the retirement of vessels as they reach the end of their useful life. In July 2025 a contract was awarded to Eastern Shipbuilders to build three 160-auto ferries with the first delivery anticipated in 2030.

The first planned conversion was completed in July 2025 when the *M/V Wenatchee* re-entered service. The vessel will reduce fuel usage by 20% without terminal electrification and by 95% with terminal electrification. Plans to electrify existing vessels were paused in 2025 until after the 2026 World Cup to ensure there are enough vessels in service to meet anticipated higher demand. WSF also plans to replace several aging terminals as well as provide needed improvements into the future.

Significant investments have been made by the legislature in workforce development to ensure there are ferry crew to maintain reliable service. Programs include apprenticeships at the Eagle Harbor Maintenance Facility, partnerships with maritime schools and deck

officer training to promote existing staff to leadership roles.

This long-range vision requires adequate funding. The draft Regional Transportation Plan's financial strategy prioritizes maintenance and preservation of all transportation system assets and includes assumptions of the full amount of funding needed to bring and maintain the system to a state of good repair into the future. This includes the full WSF fleet of vessels and terminal needs.

Passenger-Only Ferry System

The region's Passenger-Only Ferry operators are planning for expansion of their ferry networks and facilities. Plan investments from King County Metro expand the number of passenger-only ferry routes by three to six total, including the first two modern routes on Lake Washington. The new routes include Ballard to Downtown Seattle and two routes connecting the University of Washington with Kenmore and Kirkland. These routes will involve ferry terminal additions and upgrades as well as new ferry terminals. King County Metro is also planning the construction of a permanent ferry terminal in West Seattle for the existing route. Kitsap Transit is also planning for a new fast ferry terminal in Seattle to expand capacity for existing and potential passenger-only ferries.

There are further planning efforts underway to consider additional passenger-only ferry routes in the future, described in the "On The Horizon" section of this document.

In addition to the investments noted above, there are additional planned investments that would support multimodal connections to WSF and passenger-only ferry terminals. These include roadway, transit, bicycle and sidewalk improvements for improved safety and access for riders of the system.

Section 1C: Mobility on Demand

Mobility on Demand (MOD) describes services that provide flexible, on-demand transportation options instead of operating on a fixed schedule. It includes services such as micromobility, microtransit, and ridehailing, which often complement traditional public transit. The Current Transportation System Report describes the various types of MOD services currently operating throughout the region.

PSRC is not able to forecast these services into the future. However, transit-agency long-range plans and local jurisdiction comprehensive plans suggest that MOD will continue to grow and become an increasingly important component of the region's transportation system. Micromobility, for example bike and scooter sharing services, will likely become more widespread in urban areas where essential services and amenities are available within shorter distances.

In terms of microtransit, transit agencies are still determining how it can best fill gaps in the

system and where it fits within their broader hierarchy of transit service. All agencies expect that microtransit will grow as a share of overall transit service, but exactly how much over the long-term remains uncertain. Transit agency planning documents highlight how they prioritize microtransit and identify opportunities for implementation. For example, Community Transit's long-range plan Journey 2050 identifies microtransit as a potential solution for communities that do not have the population density or ridership demand to support fixed-route transit service. Destination 2045, Pierce Transit's long-range plan, highlights microtransit as an important tool for improving transit access through first- and last-mile connections to high-capacity transit services. Local jurisdictions will also collaborate with private microtransit providers to ensure that these services are integrated into curb management practices and transit service planning more broadly.

The regulatory framework for MOD is expected to continue evolving at both the state and local levels and will play a key role in how these services are implemented in communities across the region. As highlighted in Table 2 above and in the Future Transportation System Visualization Tool, there will remain areas in the region that have limited or no fixed route transit services; microtransit services may be a viable option to consider to support these communities.

Section 1D: Specialized Transportation Services

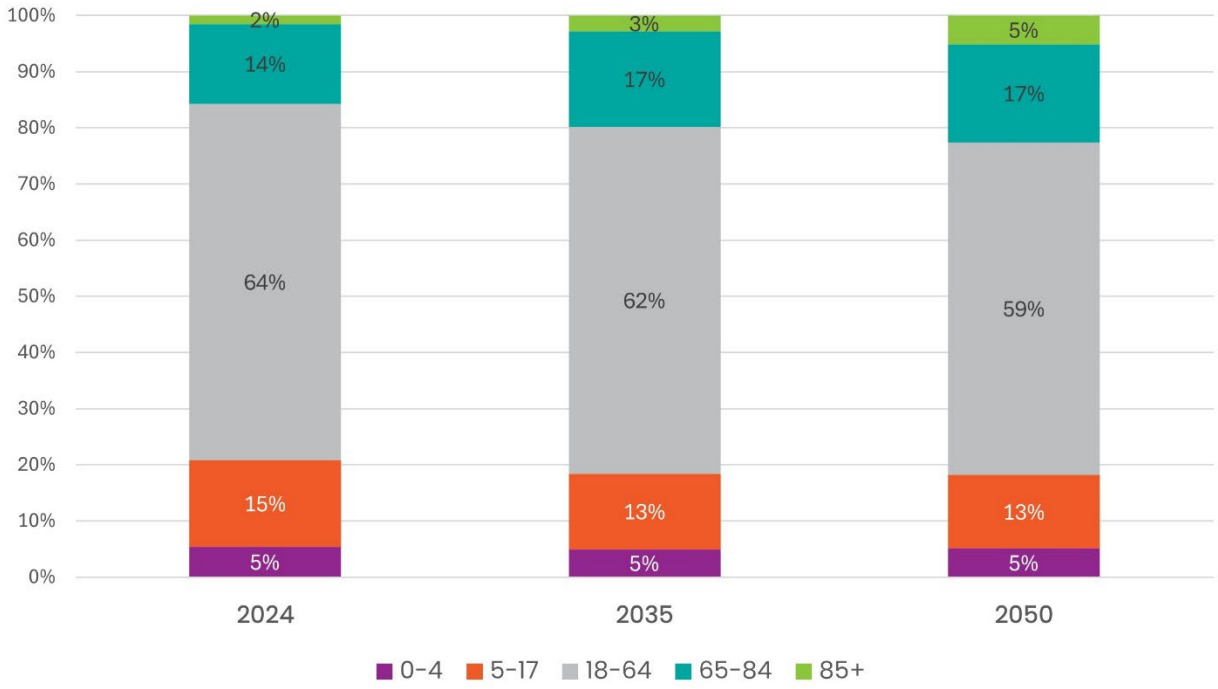
Specialized transportation refers to a range of transportation programs and services designed to support riders with accessibility and mobility challenges due to age, income or ability. These include ADA paratransit,[2] demand-response shuttles, non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), volunteer driver services, and mobility management programs that help riders understand and connect with available options.

The Current Transportation System Report describes existing specialized transportation programs and services serving as a safety net for those with mobility challenges. However, forecasting specialized transportation services is not possible in the same way that regular transit networks and services are planned and identified into the future. These services are locally administered, shaped by a mix of federal, state, and local funding sources, and are responsive to funding availability, community needs, and provider capacity. However, it is reasonable to assume that these services will continue to operate due to the expected demand with the region's population growth and changing demographics.

[2] ADA paratransit is a transportation service required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for people who cannot use fixed-route public transit because of a disability. In the central Puget Sound region, transit agencies operate wheel-chair accessible paratransit vans for eligible riders.

By 2050, the region's population will grow by 35%, with older adults aged 65 and older growing at a faster rate than other age groups. Residents ages 65-84 will make up about 17% of the population, and those over 85 will account for another 5% (see Figure 3). Together, more than one in five residents will be over 65, adding nearly 600,000 older adults to the region, equivalent to adding the current populations of Tacoma, Bellevue, Everett, and Federal Way.[3] As people age, the likelihood of experiencing a disability also increases, which may affect mobility and increase the need for accessible and reliable transportation options such as specialized transportation services.

Figure 3: Regional Population Estimates by Age Group



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2024 GMA Projections - Medium Series. Official Population Estimates for 2035 and 2050.

By 2050, ADA-complementary paratransit service areas across the region are projected to expand along with the expansion of the regional transit network, both in geographic coverage and service hours. In general, ADA paratransit service must be provided within ¾ mile of a bus route or rail station, at the same hours and days that non-commuter fixed route transit service is provided. Figure 4 illustrates the minimum ¾-mile ADA paratransit

[3] Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2022 GMA Projections - Medium Series. Official Population Estimates.

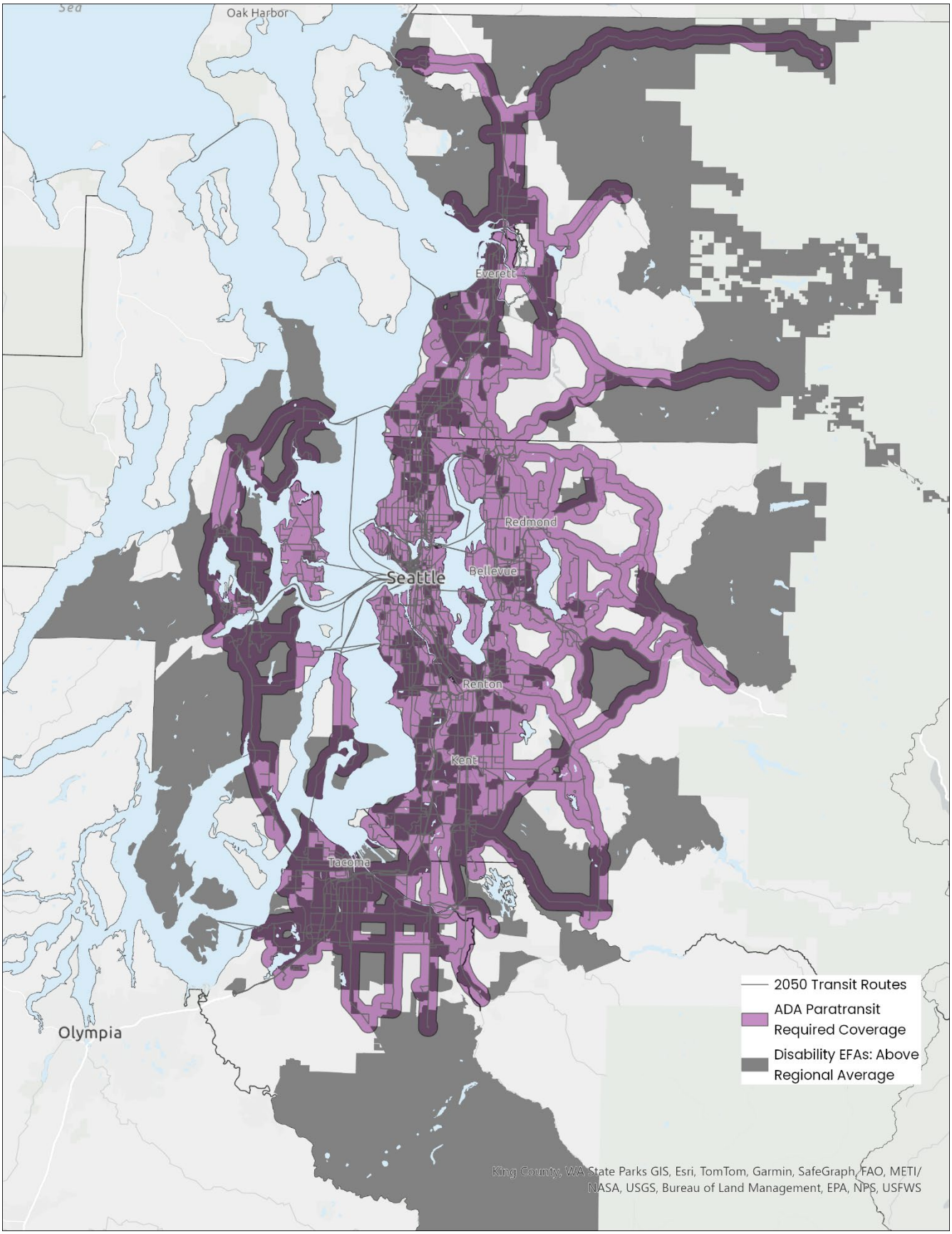
boundaries based on the 2050 future transit network.

Currently, transit agencies already provide paratransit service beyond the minimum required areas to improve access for riders who depend on accessible transportation. Anticipated future expansion will not substantially increase overall coverage, but it will extend service to areas that are currently underserved, including Darrington, Maltby, and Sumner, by providing ADA coverage aligned with new transit service in these areas.

While PSRC does not forecast disability status, by 2050, the expanded paratransit service boundary is expected to serve a larger number of residents currently living within census tracts with higher shares of people with disabilities. The planned extension of service hours will also help eligible riders with disabilities reserve trips during the times they need most. However, as shown in Figure 4, many areas with significantly higher shares of individuals with disabilities, shown in dark gray, will still remain outside the minimum paratransit coverage area.

Several transit agencies are reassessing the current paratransit service models to improve reliability and enhance the overall rider experience. Agencies such as King County Metro, Community Transit and Pierce Transit have identified in their long-range plans strategies to better integrate paratransit with emerging on-demand and microtransit services. This integration will provide a more flexible and rider-centered service, especially in areas not well served by fixed-route transit.

Figure 4: Required ADA Paratransit Service Boundaries in 2050



Beyond ADA paratransit, other specialized transportation programs like demand-response shuttles and volunteer driver programs will continue to play a critical role in connecting people to essential destinations by filling gaps in transit. These services can complement and fill gaps in fixed-route coverage, especially in lower-density areas or for trips outside paratransit service boundaries.

The Coordinated Mobility Plan provides a roadmap for adapting the specialized transportation system to meet the needs of those with mobility and accessibility challenges. The plan identifies prioritized strategies to strengthen coordination among providers, enhance access to healthcare, improve accessibility and safety of infrastructure, provide effective rider information and mobility management services, and explore more sustainable funding opportunities. Collectively, these strategies aim to close service gaps, increase efficiency, and ensure equitable mobility outcomes through 2050. A full set of prioritized strategies will be found in the Coordinated Mobility Plan when it is released with the draft Regional Transportation Plan.

Section 1E: Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a coordinated set of programs including education, incentives, products and programs that make it easier and more convenient to use non-drive-alone modes such as transit, carpool, vanpool, walking, biking, and teleworking. These programs are typically implemented by a wide variety of entities including cities, counties, transit agencies, transportation management associations (TMAs), and non-profit organizations.

The Current Transportation System Report describes the various TDM programs and activities occurring in the region today, including activities driven by the state's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law. There is no way for PSRC to forecast or project what TDM programs will be operating in 2050. However, TDM continues to be a valuable tool in shifting trips from single-occupant vehicles to other modes and the region has a strong background in these types of activities, anchored by the CTR law.

While PSRC is not a direct implementer of CTR, state law requires that a regional CTR plan be developed. PSRC worked with the 40 local jurisdictions implementing CTR in the region to combine their local 2025-2029 CTR plans into one regional plan, which will be included as a companion document to the Regional Transportation Plan. This regional plan only applies to CTR-affected worksites and reflects the goals set in the local plans.

Within the local CTR plans, jurisdictions identified limited funding as a challenge to implementing broader TDM programs in neighborhoods and communities beyond just CTR worksites. Public engagement on the development of the local CTR plans highlighted issues consistent with feedback PSRC received on development of the Regional Transportation Plan, specifically that people who cannot afford to live in dense areas well-served by transit often

drive because there is no convenient alternative. More infrastructure for active transportation, including filling gaps in the sidewalk and bicycle networks, was also a priority.

Looking forward, TDM programs that provide education on transportation options and financial incentives are expected to continue, dependent on available funding. One example of such a campaign includes Seattle's Flip Your Trip, where pledging to switch driving trips to other modes qualified residents for $25 in public transit fare credit through a TransitGO app code or an ORCA card in Summer 2025. Another example is the Switch Your Trips WA campaign, where residents who log non-drive-alone trips during the month of the campaign are entered into a drawing for cash prizes or gift cards. Choose Your Way Bellevue, Go Redmond, Kirkland Green Trip and Ride Together Pierce are local affiliates on this campaign.

More broadly, the Regional Transportation Plan supports alternatives to driving alone through investments in local and regional transit service and multimodal project investments. Additionally, the VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy and the focus of future growth in centers and near high-capacity transit encourages more compact, walkable, transit-served communities and access to jobs, schools, and services without reliance on private vehicles. As noted in the Current Transportation System Report, an expansion of TDM programs to address all types of trips and connect to transit-supportive densities could have a greater impact regionwide. In addition, improved and consistent performance monitoring will help demonstrate the benefits and effectiveness of these activities.

Section 1F: Intercity Bus and Rail

Intercity Bus

Intercity bus travel today holds a much smaller share of the intercity travel market than it once did, but it remains a lifeline service to people who cannot drive or cannot afford air travel for longer trips. To fill this gap and meet the requirements associated with federal funding for rural transportation, WSDOT implements the Travel Washington Intercity Bus program—a network of four subsidized intercity bus routes in the state. The Dungeness Line connects the central Puget Sound region to the Olympic Peninsula.

WSDOT recently evaluated this program through the 2024 Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program Study. The study included public engagement and analysis of the existing service. In the course of this public engagement, many users of the Dungeness Line described it as providing critical access to healthcare services in the Seattle-Tacoma-Everett area as well as connecting smaller communities (particularly on the Olympic Peninsula) to other transportation options in our region, like the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The study recommended adding another daily trip (for a total of three daily round trips) on the Dungeness Line to provide more flexibility and connections for people who rely on this service. Implementation of the study's recommendations is contingent on identifying and securing additional state or local funding sources.

Intercity Rail

Amtrak Cascades is an important long-range investment for our region and the larger Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor. The all-time ridership high on Amtrak Cascades in 2024 demonstrates a continued demand and interest in this service. Ensuring safety for passengers and other people near or crossing the railroad tracks, improving reliability, and coordinating future investments in Amtrak Cascades with the broader transportation system (such as Interstate 5, air travel and ultra-high-speed rail) are priorities for the future. Amtrak Cascades will soon benefit from investment in new, higher capacity trainsets as well as a new maintenance facility in Seattle.

In December 2023, Amtrak Cascades was accepted into the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (CID) program, receiving federal funds to plan and implement infrastructure improvements to increase service levels. The CID process includes six steps to advance from planning to construction and operations. WSDOT and its partners are currently in Step 1—finalizing the Amtrak Cascades Service Development Plan. This plan will be built upon the Preliminary Service Development Plan published in June 2024, which identified five alternatives for further analysis that address different service levels with varying levels of service frequency, operating speed, station stopping patterns and necessary infrastructure improvements. The final plan will include more detailed service alternatives and cost projections. The CID program was funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which is set to expire in September 2026. Longer-term funding for this program will become clearer when Congress develops the next surface transportation reauthorization act.

The Cascadia High-Speed Rail corridor was also selected for the CID program as a potential location for new high-speed rail service in the future and received federal funding for service development planning in late 2024. More information on this work is described in the final section, "On The Horizon."

WSDOT will be working to plan Amtrak Cascades and future high-speed rail service as integrated, complementary components of the statewide transportation system. Further, WSDOT is in the early stages of discussing with partners how the schedules and connections between Amtrak Cascades and local transit services can be better integrated.

Section 2: Active Transportation

The region is planning for a more connected network of sidewalks, bike lanes, and shared use paths. The future system is anticipated to provide better connections with transit and to the existing network, providing better access to regional destinations and making walking and biking safer and more comfortable.

The majority of bicycle and pedestrian investments are at the local scale and are considered "programmatic" in the Regional Transportation Plan – i.e., there are no explicit project lists

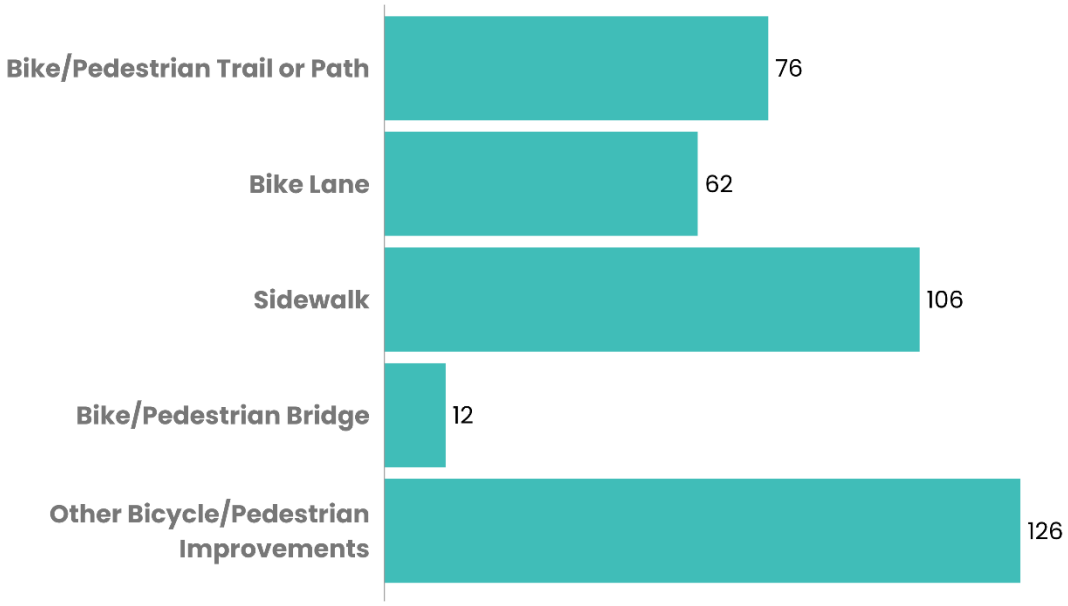
from agencies around the region, but there are commitments and program elements identified in local comprehensive plans and other planning documents. There are, however, specific investments identified on the RTP Regional Capacity Projects list. These projects are larger scale investments that impact the regional system. The Regional Capacity Projects list captures pedestrian and bicycle investments in two ways: 1) separated pathways with a cost above $25 million are considered "regional" investments and are identified as distinct projects; and 2) many other regional projects include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as part of their overall scope.

Data is provided below on the information gathered from the Regional Capacity Projects list and from an analysis of the future transportation system represented in the draft Regional Transportation Plan. It is important to note that PSRC cannot analyze the programmatic investments and reflect their benefit to the overall system by 2050, but these local investments are critical for building safe and connected active transportation infrastructure within each community.

Planned Active Transportation Investments by 2050

There are a total of 278 Regional Capacity Projects in the draft RTP, and 209 of these include pedestrian and bicycle elements. These are illustrated in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Regional Capacity Projects with Pedestrian/Bicycle Elements



Reminder: These elements are not additive; i.e., one project may include multiple elements.

Noticeably, sidewalks and other pedestrian and bicycle improvements are by far the most

commonly cited scope elements. Improvements grouped under "other pedestrian and bicycle improvements" may include enhanced pedestrian crossings, lighting upgrades, signal upgrades and various other pedestrian and bicycle treatments. While less common than sidewalk improvements, roughly 40% of the projects include bike lanes or a pedestrian/bicycle trail or path.

The Current Transportation System Report provides information on current pedestrian and bicycle facilities, as well as an analysis of the current system across various metrics. These include facilities on the regional High-Injury Network (HIN) with high rates of collisions involving pedestrians or bicyclists, as well as an assessment of key gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle system. A similar assessment was conducted for the future system, based on the Regional Capacity Projects list.

Many of the planned projects address facilities on the pedestrian and bicycle HIN. Specifically, 98 Regional Capacity Projects add active transportation facilities or treatments to roadways with high rates of collisions involving people walking or biking. This represents improvements to 42% of the roadways on the pedestrian and bicycle HIN. However, as noted, many more programmatic investments are planned at the local level that would also be expected to provide improvements and address existing safety issues.

System Gap Analysis

Of the 209 Regional Capacity Projects that include pedestrian and/or bicycle elements as noted above, 167 of these projects address the 464 miles of identified pedestrian gaps and 1,077 miles of identified bicycle gaps on the current regional network.[4] The projects will add pedestrian and bicycle treatments on approximately 14% of facilities with a pedestrian gap and 22% of facilities with a bicycle gap. However, when looking at the highest priority gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle network – i.e., those described in the Current Transportation System Report as being on the Pedestrian/Bicycle HIN, within a higher density area, in an equity focus area and having no or partial facilities - up to 50% of these will be addressed with pedestrian and bicycle treatments in the planned Regional Capacity Projects.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Travel in 2050

As the Regional Capacity Projects and other programmatic projects are completed, options for comfortably walking and biking will be more prevalent. In 2023, on an average weekday 10% of trips were made by walking and 1% were made by biking across our region.[5] In 2050, a greater share of trips will be made by walking and biking, particularly in Regional Growth Centers. An analysis of future conditions indicates that regionwide over 20% of trips are

[4] The sidewalk gap figure represents principal arterials with no or partial sidewalk facilities. The bicycle gap figure represents principal arterials with no or partial bicycle facilities as well as facilities with a high level of traffic stress (LTS).

[5] PSRC 2023 Household Travel Survey

expected to be made by walking and nearly 2% by biking in 2050. The analysis breaks down anticipated walking and biking mode shares by various geographies, as shown in Table 3 below.

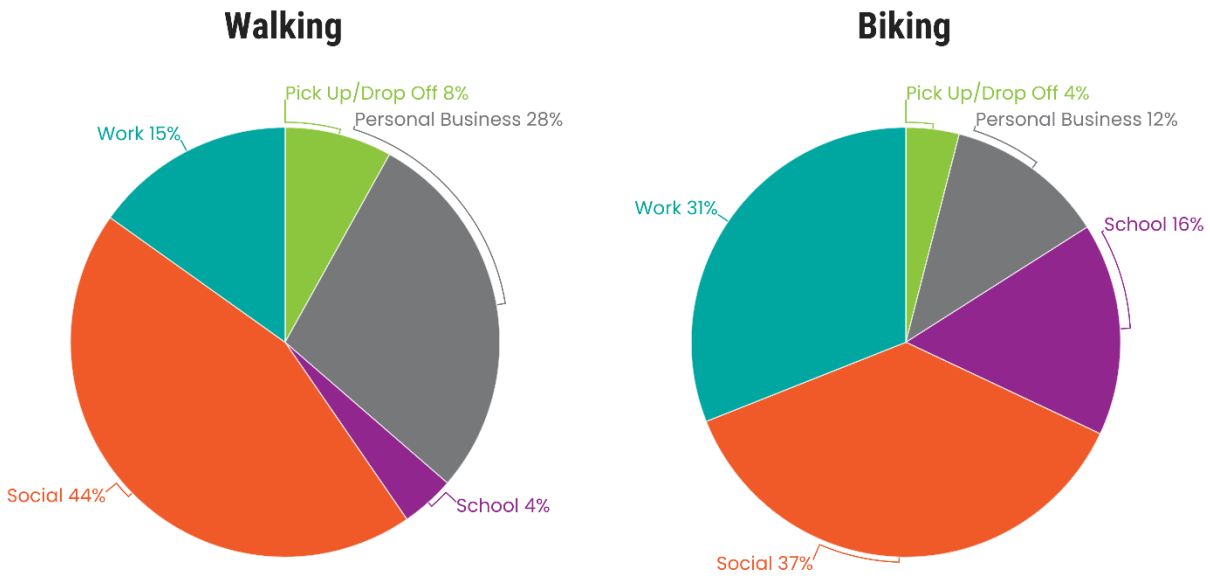
Table 3: Walking and Biking Mode Shares for All Trips in 2050, by Regional Geography

Geography	Walk	Bike
Region	20%	2%
King County	23%	2%
Kitsap County	17%	1%
Pierce County	18%	2%
Snohomish County	16%	2%
Regional Growth Centers	52%	3%
Core Cities	17%	2%
HCT Communities	13%	2%
Metropolitan Cities	33%	3%
Cities and Towns	12%	1%
Rural Areas	6%	1%
Urban Unincorporated Areas	10%	1%

Walking and biking mode shares were also explored by trip purpose. In almost every geography, higher shares of walking and biking are observed for non-work trips than for work trips. These include trips for social activities, shopping, school, and other non-work purposes.

Figure 6 below shows a further breakdown of walking and biking by various trip purposes. Notably, social trips are projected to be the most common trip purpose for both walking and biking in 2050. The next most common purpose for walking was trips for "Personal Business," a category that includes travel for shopping, meals, and other errands. For biking, travel for work and school stand out as the next most common trip purposes for cyclists.

Figure 6: 2050 Walking and Biking Trip Purposes



An analysis was also conducted of walking and biking mode shares across PSRC's six equity focus areas. The regional average walking mode share is 20% and the regional average biking mode share is 2%. There is little variation in projected bicycle mode share, however a greater share of walking trips is expected in areas with populations above the regional average for people of color and people with low incomes. Areas with significantly above the regional average for people with a disability are also expected to have a higher share of walking trips.

More details on the future pedestrian and bicycle system and key trends will be included in the draft Regional Transportation Plan, particularly the 2026 Active Transportation Plan.

Section 3: Streets and Highways

Streets and highways provide the foundation of the region's multimodal transportation system. Street rights-of-way may include vehicle lanes, transit lanes, bicycle lanes, sidewalks or shoulders, and/or planted strips that provide buffers between vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. Buses, streetcars, freight trucks, automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and sometimes light rail all travel in the street network, sometimes in space dedicated to their specific travel mode and sometimes mixed in shared space.

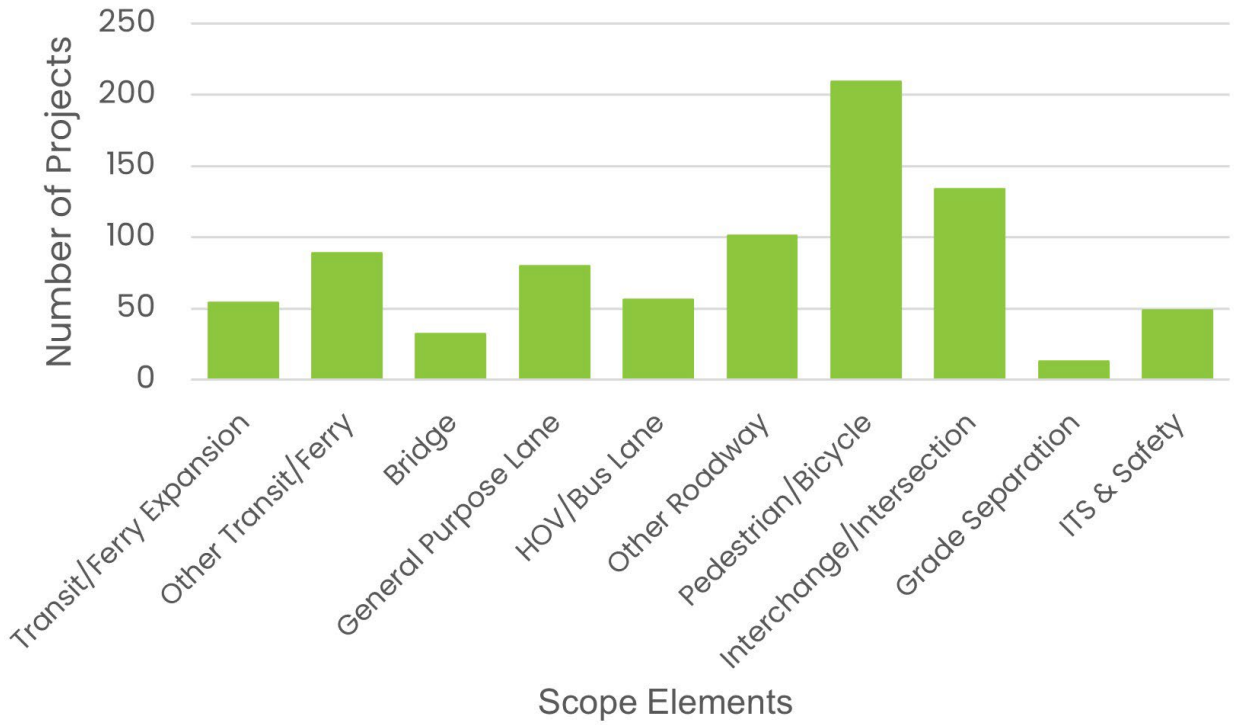
Future System Investments

The draft Regional Transportation Plan includes investments that preserve and maintain the transportation system, improve the system's efficiency, and expand the system with

strategic capacity. There are both large and small-scale investments that reflect improvement to various modes of travel on a wide range of facilities, from local streets to major freeways.

Regional Capacity Projects seek to modify capacity on the regional transportation network. These projects are required to be explicitly identified on the Regional Capacity Projects list and are subject to additional review and approval by PSRC's Boards. Specific thresholds are identified to determine if an investment is considered a Regional Capacity Project. The draft Regional Capacity Projects list includes 278 investments planned within the region between now and 2050. These projects include improvements for all modes of travel; key scope elements included in the projects in the draft plan are summarized in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Scope Elements of Regional Capacity Projects



Most projects include multiple scope elements. Sixty-nine percent of the projects on the Regional Capacity Projects list are multimodal, providing improvements for some combination of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and/or vehicle travel. Examples of these improvements include roadway re-channelization that also provides bicycle lanes, enhanced sidewalks and transit stops; or the addition of a high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lane that accommodates carpools and buses. About 17% of the Regional Capacity Projects provide improvements for vehicle travel, improving conditions for freight trucks and buses,

as well as for automobiles.

From those projects in the plan that do add general purpose capacity to the streets and highway network, only 1.9% additional lane miles is being added to the total system by 2050. Analysis of the projects finds that 61% are improving facilities experiencing heavy or severe congestion, and 56% are improving facilities located on the regional High Injury Network. Safety improvements within these projects may include the separation of different modes traveling on the street or highway, reducing conflict points between vehicles and/or with bicyclists or pedestrians, improving visibility, or designing improvements along curves. The majority (78%) of projects adding general purpose capacity to the system are less than two miles in length. Projects between two and five miles in length are approximately 16% of the total, and 6% over five miles in length. These include larger scale priority highway investments that have been underway for many years, such as the state's "Gateway" expansion of State Routes 167 and 509.

The draft plan also includes projects on streets and highways that extend the HOV system and add Business Access Transit (BAT) lanes. Several of these projects on interstates and major highways transition current, or add new, HOV lanes to function as express toll lanes in the future. One key example is the expansion of the I-405 express toll lane system.

There are also significant investments planned on streets and highways that are not identified on the Regional Capacity Projects list. These investments include improvements at a more local scale for all travel modes and are considered programmatic in the plan's financial strategy. Programmatic investments include projects that improve overall safety and operations without significantly increasing the capacity of the regional transportation system. Examples include reconfigurations to address bottlenecks at interchange ramps or along roadways, improved pedestrian connections and crossings, Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements (discussed in detail in the Technology section), safety improvements, or capacity improvements to minor arterials or local streets. These are not called out as individual investments in the Regional Transportation Plan, but more details are contained within the transportation elements of city and county comprehensive plans and other local planning documents.

Programmatic investments also include preservation and maintenance activities, which is a key priority that will be discussed in greater detail in the draft plan. Assets in poor condition – roadways, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bridges, transit vehicles and facilities and all other transportation assets - degrade mobility and safety for users as well as the overall reliability of the transportation system. The draft plan recognizes the importance of bringing and maintaining the overall transportation system to a state of good repair and prioritizes full funding for this critical element.

Future Conditions

Table 4 summarizes key performance measures of the streets and highways system, for existing and forecast 2050 conditions.

Table 4: Key Performance Metrics, 2050 Streets and Highways System

Metric	Today	2050	% Change
Regional Lane Miles	13,635	13,912	1.9%
Daily Vehicle Trips	13,079,000	15,880,000	21%
Miles of Roadway with Severe or Heavy Congestion	458	585	28%
Total Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled	82,446,000	98,716,000	20%
Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled per Capita	18.9	17.1	-10%
Total Daily Hours of Delay	212,000	332,000	56%
Annual Vehicle Hours of Delay per Capita	15.6 hours	18.4 hours	18%

While population and jobs are expected to increase 33% respectively by 2050, vehicle trips are expected to grow at a lower rate of 21% overall. The lower rate of vehicle trip growth can be explained by the forecasts that also indicate shifts toward transit, walking, and biking at rates that outpace this projected growth. The number of roadways experiencing severe or heavy congestion is projected to grow by 28% and annual hours of delay per capita are projected to grow by 18%, both of which are also lower than the rate of population and jobs growth.

Changes in delay vary across the region with the largest improvements between today and 2050 being in the largest cities where the delay per capita is forecasted to reduce by almost 50%. This compares with a slight increase in unincorporated areas across the region. This is reflective of closer proximities of jobs and services for more people, as well as higher transit availability that is expected as the region continues to grow.

Greater detail on the overall performance of the system across a wide variety of metrics is included in the draft plan's System Performance Report. In addition, information on additional planning work being conducted by WSDOT is included in the "On The Horizon"

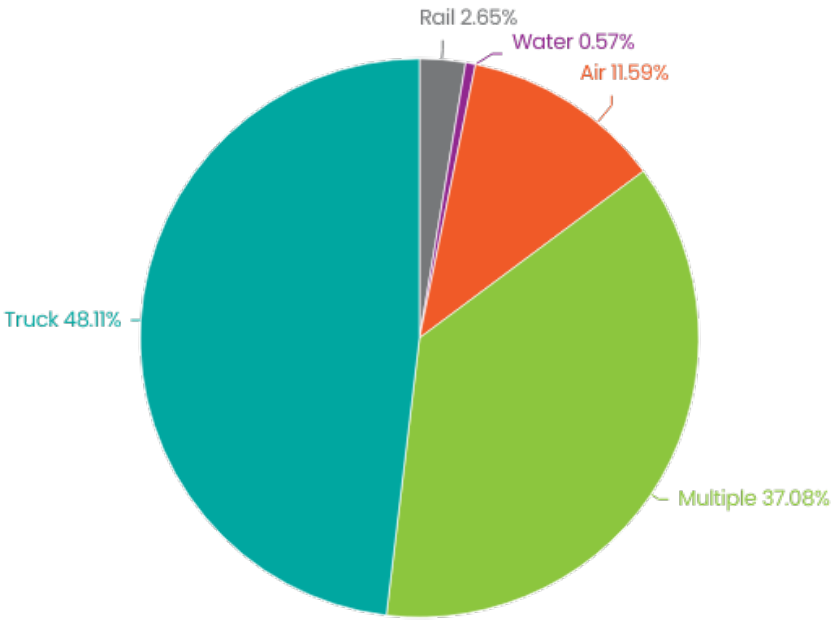
section later in this document.

Section 4: Freight

The regional freight system is comprised of a wide array of components that include dedicated freight infrastructure like marine ports and intermodal terminals in addition to facilities like airports, railways, streets and highways that need to be able to accommodate the movement of both people and goods. See Section 4 of the Current Transportation System Report for more information about the freight network as it exists today.

The regional freight system will continue to be integral to the movement of goods throughout the state of Washington in the future. Currently, over 750 million tons of goods are forecast to move through the state in 2050, valued at almost $1.3 trillion. It is expected that 260 million tons of goods valued at more than $643 billion will move into, out of, and through the central Puget Sound region. In terms of dollar value, the region is forecast to move almost as many goods in 2050 as the entire state currently moves.

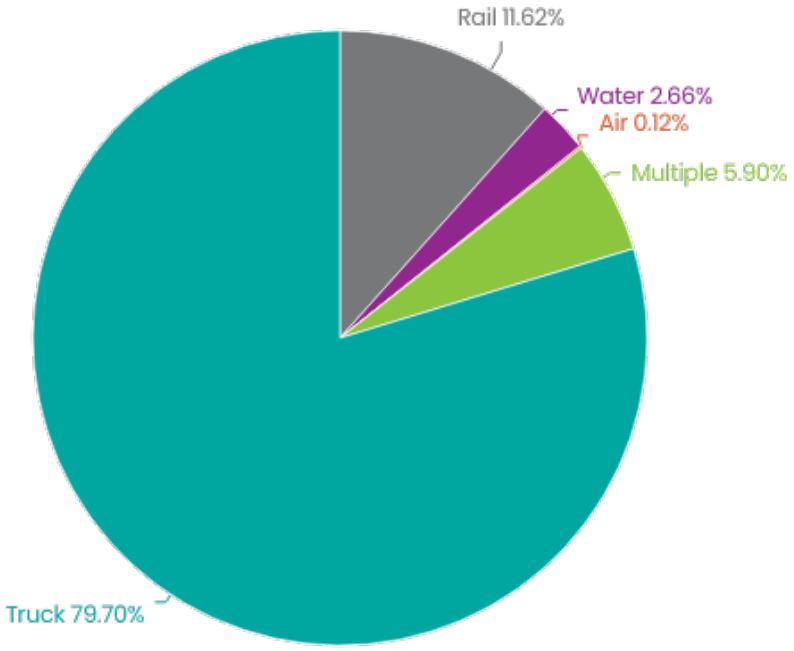
Figure 8: Percent of Each Mode Forecast to Move Freight Through the Central Puget Sound Region Based on Value (2050)



Source: WSDOT Commodity Flow Dashboard

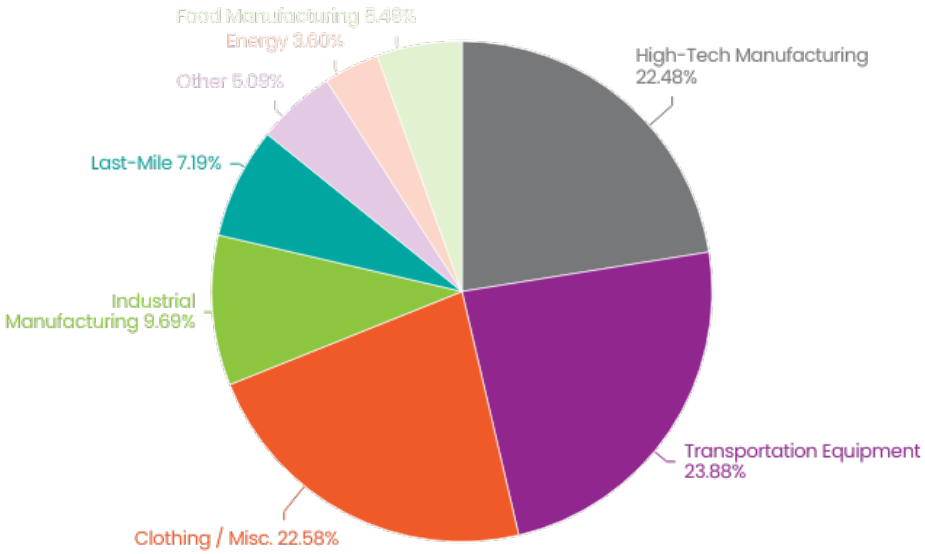
The majority of these goods are expected to still be transported by truck, though advances in electric and autonomous vehicle technology may bring about changes in the trucking industry overall including where trucks park and refuel in the region. Other modes, such as airplanes, cargo ships and freight trains will also remain critically important to the movement of goods, with the mode or modes used continuing to be optimized for each commodity based on factors including cost, distance, quantity of goods being transported, and speed.

Figure 9: Percent of Each Mode Forecast to Move Freight Through the Central Puget Sound Region Based on Tonnage (2050)



Source: WSDOT Commodity Flow Dashboard

Figure 10: Proportions of Major Commodities Forecast to Move Through the Central Puget Sound Region Based on Value (2050)



Source: WSDOT Commodity Flow Dashboard

All types of commodities are expected to continue to move on the regional freight system, though the relative proportion of each commodity may change due to a variety of factors. The current forecast is for *Transportation Equipment, High-Tech Manufacturing,* and *Clothing and Miscellaneous Manufacturing* to continue to be the largest categories based on dollar value.

The Regional Freight System in 2050

As mentioned above, trucks will continue to move the most goods in 2050. Based on current assumptions, truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is anticipated to grow more than 20% by 2050.

Table 5: Truck Performance Metrics

	2023		2050	
Metric	Medium Trucks	Heavy Trucks	Medium Trucks	Heavy Trucks
Daily VMT	3,203,000	2,582,000	3,577,000	3,511,000
Average Annual hours of Delay	9.4	16.0	9.8	23.7
Daily Trips	319,000	135,000	441,000	183,000

Many of the Regional Capacity Projects contained in the draft Regional Transportation Plan will directly improve the regional freight network. Over one hundred (40%) of the projects are located on designated freight routes, and over forty (16%) are located within the region's Manufacturing / Industrial Centers. These projects will enhance freight movement in a variety of ways, ranging from projects that facilitate truck movement to safety improvements that will reduce conflicts between modes.

One of the most significant changes to freight movement in the region will be the opening of the new SR 167 alignment between Puyallup and the Port of Tacoma. The project will extend the freeway to the Port, bypassing the local streets that are currently used. Coupled with related projects like the I-5 / Port of Tacoma Road Interchange and the I-5/ 54th Avenue East Interchange, there will be significant improvements in how trucks move in and out of the Port of Tacoma vicinity.

The SR 509 Completion Project will also bring major benefits for regional freight movement by completing a missing link in the highway network. It will establish a new connection to SEA that will increase access for both passengers and cargo.

Both the SR 167 and SR 509 projects will enhance freight movement by making new connections between the region's industrial lands and ports; they are also expected to reduce congestion on local streets and I-5 by providing alternate routes. The projects will also benefit pedestrians and bicyclists though the construction of over 13 miles of new shared-use paths and over 4 miles of new sidewalks.

Additional freight-focused infrastructure improvements that are on the Regional Capacity Projects list include two railway grade separation projects that will improve freight movement and reduce modal conflicts. Fife's 70th Avenue East Railroad Crossing and Seattle's SODO Rail Corridor Grade Separations will bring benefits to all modes travelling through these areas.

Many of the other projects currently planned in the region that will benefit freight movement will not change the overall capacity of the transportation system. These investments, such as maintenance and preservation of freight facilities, separation of pedestrians and bicycles

from the roadway, and operational efficiencies, are considered programmatic and are not captured in the Regional Capacity Projects list.

Even with the investments described above, with the growth in total truck trips and VMT as illustrated in Table 5, an increase in delay is also anticipated between now and 2050, particularly for heavy trucks.

Key Freight Issues

Collisions involving heavy trucks have higher risks of crashes resulting in deaths and serious injuries, particularly when vulnerable users are involved.[6] Incorporating safety features is a key element in Regional Capacity Projects and is included in the plan consistency framework by which every project is evaluated. As not all countermeasures are appropriate for freight intensive areas, it is crucial that these improvements are designed to avoid disruptions to freight movement while also reducing opportunities for conflicts between freight traffic and other users of the transportation system. As an example, projects in Seattle's Duwamish MIC, including Airport Way South Multimodal Improvements and 1st Avenue South Multimodal Improvements, are expected to include operational elements that improve conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists such as enhanced crossings, in addition to freight features like ITS and freight-only lanes. Projects like WSDOT's SR 3 Truck Climbing Lane will strategically add capacity to the regional network to mitigate an existing freight bottleneck and improve safety for motorists.

When considering how the freight transportation system will intersect with where people and jobs are going to be located in 2050, there are locations in the region where this growth will overlap with existing major truck routes. It is essential that local agencies factor freight into their plans and permit approvals to limit potential conflicts between modes and maximize the needs of both people and goods movement in these joint areas.

Even with the level of investments currently planned through 2050, there are additional considerations and further work ahead to ensure that freight moves safely and efficiently into the future. PSRC's Freight Advisory Committee identifies maintenance and preservation of freight corridors as the number one freight investment priority for the region. Other major priorities include decarbonizing freight vehicles and infrastructure, and increasing the availability of truck parking. As noted in the Current Transportation System Report, completing the projects outlined in the 2024 Washington State Truck Parking Implementation Plan will be crucial in order to alleviate the challenges truck drivers face in finding adequate space to rest.

[6] WSDOT Freight System Plan, Appendix F, p. 21

Section 5: Transportation System Technology

The Current Transportation System Report describes the various Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies currently in operation that help the overall system operate more efficiently and effectively. These include various components such as traffic and pedestrian crossing signals, traffic control centers, cameras, dynamic messaging systems and many others.

There is not a way to forecast these networks or identify a list of future ITS projects, however the draft plan assumes continued levels of investment in these tools. State and local planning documents indicate that nearly all jurisdictions will continue to make investments to maintain existing ITS and traffic operations infrastructure, as well as invest in new ITS projects and programs. A few examples of these types of investments include:

- Managed lanes/express toll lane systems on the interstates;
- Traffic flow and enforcement tools including Adaptive Signal Control and CCTV cameras;
- Increasing efficiencies and capabilities at Traffic Management Centers;
- More widespread usage of video analytics to identify priority safety investments; and
- Transit speed and reliability improvements

Many of the larger scale projects included on the Regional Capacity Projects list incorporate ITS-based elements. This includes transit signal priority (TSP) as part of multiple Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects, as well as several highway and corridor projects that incorporate adaptive signal control installations.

The Current Transportation System Report identifies potential ITS gaps based on a spatial overlay of the existing ITS/traffic signal network with various other layers. This includes frequent transit routes on corridors without transit signal priority, congested corridors that do not have coordinated or adaptive signals, and portions of the bicycle and pedestrian HIN without Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS). Agencies can refer to the Future System Visualization Tool to identify where opportunities for future ITS implementation may exist on the future transportation network.

Established ITS technologies and operational assets are expected to become increasingly interwoven with newer and emerging technologies (e.g. a growing electric vehicle fleet, more sophisticated real-time traveler information systems, and connected and autonomous vehicles). It is presumed that the majority of investment in the research and development of emerging technologies will continue to occur in the private sector, while the public sector will primarily focus on establishing a regulatory framework, designing infrastructure, and developing plans and policies.

Section 6: Aviation

VISION 2050 recognizes the critical role that aviation plays for people and businesses in the growing central Puget Sound region, as well as its impacts to communities and the environment. Continued coordinated planning is needed to ensure the regional airport system can accommodate growth in aviation, and regional goals related to the environment and maintaining a sustainable, multimodal transportation system continue to be met. The Port of Seattle works with local, regional and state partner agencies on surface transportation needs to ensure passengers, employees and cargo can get to the airport for their flights or jobs, day or night.

VISION 2050 established the following policy to address the development of new commercial aviation capacity:

- Promote coordinated planning and effective management to optimize the region's aviation system in a manner that minimizes health, air quality, and noise impacts to communities, including historically marginalized communities. Consider demand management alternatives as future growth needs are analyzed, recognizing capacity constraints at existing facilities and the time and resources necessary to build new ones. Support the ongoing process of development of a new commercial aviation facility in Washington State.

In addition, planning for the future airport system is guided by the following regional policies:

- The region should maximize aviation capacity within the existing regional airport system before constructing new airports.
- The State of Washington will play a lead role in addressing aviation capacity needs and place a priority on funding and planning the state's air transportation system. This work is being led by the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Commercial Aviation Work Group.
- When additional capacity is forecast to be needed, and no feasible airport capacity is available within the region, the state will take the lead role in addressing capacity needs, including by funding a site selection study for the placement of new airport(s) if no sponsor is available.

The Future Aviation System

Projected demand for regional passenger boardings is approximately 55,600,000 by 2050—nearly double 2018 demand, creating a gap in capacity of about 27 million unmet passenger boardings each year based upon existing capacity in 2022. Boardings include passengers both originating trips at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport as well as passengers making connecting flights.

When planning to accommodate this demand, many factors affecting both existing and potential new capacity need to be considered, including access to airports, community and environmental impacts, and support for important regional industries.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA)

The Port of Seattle developed a Sustainable Airport Master Plan (SAMP) in 2018 as a blueprint for SEA development, guiding the strategic design and implementation of new facilities to accommodate future aviation demand.

In addition to considering forecasted passenger and cargo demand, the master plan takes stock of current facilities, infrastructure, and operations — looking at demand and capacity scenarios five, 10 and 20 years in the future. It includes air quality, energy and water conservation, recycling and other strategic environmental goals, and will align with the Port's sustainability and energy efficiency goals.

The SAMP has five focus areas:

- Meet forecast passenger demand
- Meet forecast cargo demand
- Comply with FAA airfield standards/guidance
- Improve operational efficiency
- Provide additional fuel capacity and meet the Port's Sustainable Aviation Biofuel initiative

The SAMP identifies a subset of 31 Near-Term Projects (Upgrade SEA) that are intended to serve 56 million annual passengers as well as flights and cargo activity at an optimal level of service, about half of the region's forecasted demand for the year 2050[7]. This number includes passengers originating and ending travel and connecting through SEA.

Key Near-Term Projects include:

- A second passenger terminal with 19 additional gates added to the current 89 gates
- An elevated busway and stations linking the existing rental car facility, the new terminal, and main terminal
- Cargo facilities to replace current facilities and to accommodate air freight

[7] Note that "passengers served" is a broader measure than passenger boardings that includes not only departing passengers (boardings) but also arrivals, connections, and passengers using terminal facilities without flying. For example, if 100 passengers take a direct flight from Seattle to Los Angeles, that is 100 boardings in Seattle, but potentially 200 "passengers served" in total (100 departing SEA + 100 arriving LAX).

- Realigning airport roadways
- Airfield updates
- New parking to serve the second terminal
- Additional facilities for sustainable aviation fuel.

These projects are expected to be underway or completed by 2032.

Paine Field Airport (PAE)

Paine Field Airport (PAE) in Snohomish County served 511,023 passengers in the year ending February 2020. While more recent volumes have not matched this first year of service, PAE expects to return to 2019 levels soon as business travel continues to improve. Anticipating increased demand in the future, Snohomish County adopted an updated Master Plan in 2024 to outline a framework for the development of airport facilities and services to serve a range of between one and 4.3 million annual passengers.

The PAE Master Plan identifies potential improvements to serve increased passengers and air cargo over the next 20 years, and if approved by local authorities and the Federal Aviation Administration, would require larger passenger terminal and parking facilities, modifications to the internal airport road network and additional support facilities for general aviation.

In the highest growth scenario, commercial aviation service at PAE would grow from the current three total aircraft stands (or gates) to 15, with seven terminal gates and eight remote stand positions. This would require construction of terminal space, airfield improvements, new support facilities, additional parking and roadway access improvements. If realized, the PAE Master Plan estimates that these improvements would cost approximately $300 million.

Additional Aviation Capacity

While plans for increased capacity at SEA and PAE would accommodate significant new service to the region's aviation system, a large gap between projected need by 2050 and regional capacity would remain. There are several efforts underway in the region to investigate additional aviation capacity.

In 2023 the Washington State Legislature created a Commercial Aviation Work Group (HB 1791) to evaluate the long-range commercial aviation and transportation needs of the state, including alternatives for additional aviation capacity which includes expanding use of existing airports and multimodal opportunities. The work group will focus on use of new technology, environmental stewardship and resiliency in aviation.

In 2024 the Port of Bremerton began studying the feasibility of introducing limited passenger or cargo service at Bremerton National Airport. The initial study had two components: a

preliminary analysis of potential market opportunities, and public outreach to determine what people want from Bremerton National Airport. In March 2025, the Port of Bremerton advanced Phase 2 of the feasibility study, which should be completed by late 2026. Phase 2 will examine several questions in greater detail, including:

- Potential local and highway traffic impacts
- Noise impacts from introducing new service
- What infrastructure the Port would need to build
- Potential funding sources for airport improvements
- More detail on potential market opportunities

Conducting Phase 2 does not guarantee that the Port will begin any new commercial aviation services at Bremerton National Airport. Significant work would remain between the conclusion of this phase and the start of any new service. That work would involve securing funding sources, state and federal environmental review, permitting, and the design and construction of any required infrastructure.

When considering the longer-term future of aviation and air travel, questions about the future of transportation are being talked about and explored regionally and nationally. Questions ranging from the impact of emerging technology such as the expanding use of drones, the expanded use of personal aircraft, and the potential for air taxi service will gain more specificity as work on these ideas continues.

One emerging technology that the Washington State Legislature tasked WSDOT to explore is Advanced Air Mobility (AAM). This refers to air transportation that utilizes electric or hydrogen-powered aircrafts and innovative takeoff and landing methods for on-demand passenger mobility, goods delivery, and emergency response. For more information about what this technology entails and an evaluation of the implications for Washington State, please refer to WSDOT's Advanced Air Mobility Aircraft Plan.

As we imagine the transformation of the region over the coming decades, far-ranging big ideas such as these should be explored as part of the ongoing regional conversation about the future of transportation. PSRC will continue to work closely with the state, airport operators, its members, and the region's communities as new capacity is developed to safely and equitably accommodate aviation demand.

Section 7: Summary

As reflected in this report, the planned future transportation system will continue to be a complex interconnection of facilities and networks, serving multiple modes and purposes of travel. The system serves a vibrant and growing region and requires significant efforts to

maintain and operate daily.

There will be a tremendous amount of investment in the system through 2050, addressing the needs of the current system and the anticipated growth in people and jobs. However, challenges will remain and continued planning and coordination across the region will be critical. The key performance findings noted in this report illustrate the unique and context-specific needs across the region's varied communities and geographies – e.g., gaps in different types of transit services where forecast densities would support them, the continued needs of those with mobility challenges, and areas of the region that are reliant on vehicle travel in the absence of reliable multimodal options.

Additional details of the planned investments may be found in the Regional Capacity Projects list and the Future Transportation System Visualization Tool. These resources and additional background on development of the draft plan may be found on the RTP Engagement Hub. The full draft Regional Transportation Plan will be released for public review and comment between mid-December through February 2026.

Section 8: On The Horizon

This document describes the future transportation system as reflected in the 2026 RTP and the significant progress that will be made. However, there is more work to be done, and much more work is already underway in early planning stages. Examples of these needs and current efforts are described below. As these efforts move beyond planning into specific capital projects with identified scopes and budgets, there will be opportunities to include them in future state, regional and local plans, including future Regional Transportation Plans.

Cascadia High Speed Rail and I-5 Program

In March 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed the Move Ahead Washington transportation package that included funding and direction for WSDOT to advance two major planning efforts focused on the future of Western Washington's transportation system.

- Continued exploration of a high-speed rail system for the Cascadia Megaregion, consistent with the November 2021 Memorandum of Understanding signed by the governors of Washington and Oregon and the Premier of British Columbia.
- A comprehensive Master Plan for Interstate 5 (I-5) in Washington state from the U.S.-Canada international border to the Washington- Oregon border.

Consistent with legislative direction to coordinate planning work across modes, WSDOT integrated the I-5 Master Plan and Cascadia High-Speed Rail into one program. The Cascadia High-Speed Rail and I-5 Program focuses on the regional transportation system for the movement of people and goods, the strategic use of resources, and a comprehensive

understanding of area communities, their needs, and regional opportunities. Over the next few years work will continue on the development of the I-5 Master Plan and a service development plan for Cascadia High-Speed Rail under Step 2 of the federal CID Program. Reports on both efforts will be provided to the Legislature in 2026.

I-5 Nisqually Delta Study

WSDOT is conducting a study of the I-5 Nisqually Delta project from Marvin Rd. to Mounts Rd. in Pierce County. In July 2023, a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the project was completed, and the NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) was initiated in July of 2024.

The purpose of the project is to:

- Enhance mobility and connectivity on Interstate 5 for passenger vehicles, freight, transit, active transportation.
- Provide support for increased person and freight throughput.
- Improve local and mainline I-5 system resiliency.
- Enable environmental restoration and ecosystem resiliency at the I-5 crossing of the Nisqually River Delta area.
- Support economic vitality through reliable and efficient freight movement and access to major employers.

WSDOT expects to publish the EA report for public review in summer 2026. The final decision document is expected to be released during winter of 2027 including a preferred alternative to improve I-5 mobility.

State Route 3 Gorst Planning Study

The Gorst area is at the junction of two freeways in Kitsap County: SR 3 and SR 16. SR 3 serves as the principal access route for Kitsap County communities, the Olympic Peninsula, and the Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton, which includes the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and serves as the homeport for Navy aircraft carriers. Other military installations in Kitsap County are located north of Gorst. The area also serves as a key transportation junction, with connections to Belfair and Shelton via SR 3, Port Orchard via SR 166, Bremerton via SR 304, and the Olympic Peninsula via the Hood Canal Bridge.

Previous studies have identified community concerns in the Gorst area, including congestion, safety, access, and resiliency issues such as roadway closures due to earthquakes and increased coastal flooding from high tides and storm surge. In 2018 WSDOT completed a congestion study for SR 16 from the Tacoma Narrows Bridge to SR 3. The study identified corridor strategies and solutions to address congestion and traffic operational issues on SR 16, including the interchange area with SR 3 at Gorst.

Based on local concerns and findings from the congestion study, the Washington State Legislature appropriated state and federal funding for the SR 3/Gorst area widening project in 2023. In response, WSDOT is developing a PEL study for the SR 3 Gorst area expected to be

completed in November 2026. The NEPA process is anticipated to start in July 2027.

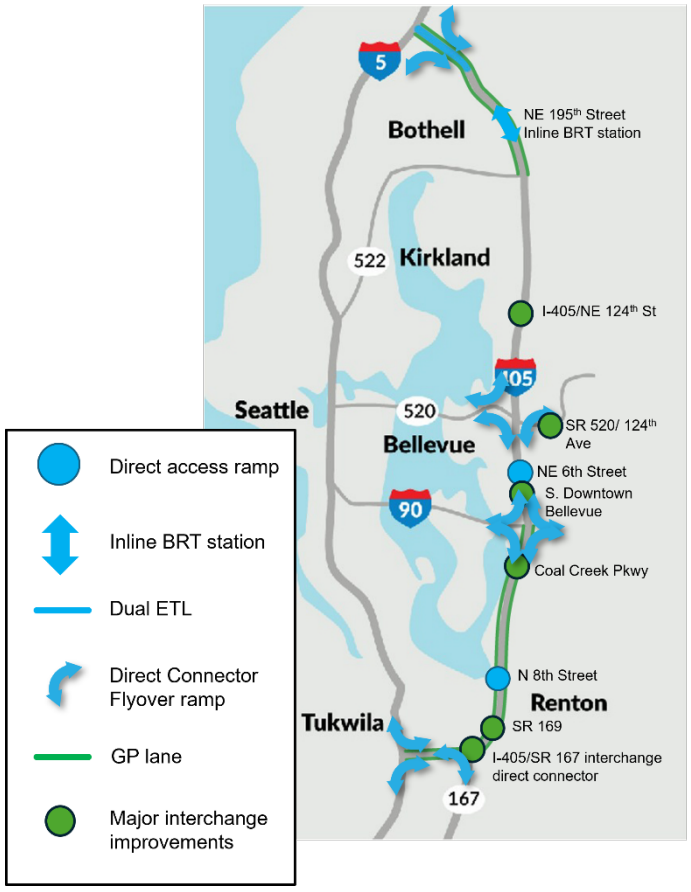
SR 167 Master Plan

In June 2023, WSDOT completed the SR 167 Master Plan using an equity-focused, community-centered approach to identify issues and develop a set of recommended transportation projects and strategies that serve the needs of those living and working in and around the corridor. The Master Plan analyzed existing and future conditions, incorporating information from the public and partner engagement to identify near, medium, and long-term multimodal transportation improvements and strategies. The study area included the existing SR 167 facility from the Port of Tacoma (SR 509) to Renton. WSDOT also considered the local system and worked with other transportation providers to fully understand corridor needs and solutions. The 167 Master Plan recommends dual express toll lanes, support for high-capacity transit and connectivity improvements between communities.

In 2025, WSDOT received federal funds from PSRC to begin developing the SR 167 Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will guide future funding and phasing strategies, informed by preliminary engineering, traffic analysis, and cost estimates developed in coordination with corridor partners.

I-405 Master Plan

Completed in 2002, the I-405 Master Plan provides a multimodal, partner driven vision for the corridor that guides project development, funding, and delivery. The Master Plan includes over 150 individual, but coordinated, projects - involving multiple agencies -designed to improve travel between Lynnwood and the Renton/Tukwila area. Key elements include a two-lane express toll system, improved interchanges, direct access and a corridor-wide bus rapid transit (BRT) line to provide travelers with a fast and frequent transit option. The plan also targets bottlenecks at the SR 167, I-90, SR 520, and I-5 interchanges while investing in key arterials and new transit centers.



Implementation initially addressed the worst chokepoints in Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland and Bothell. Since then, WSDOT

has prioritized system reliability through managed lanes and coordination with Sound Transit to support delivery of the I-405 BRT system. WSDOT continues to collaborate with local jurisdictions and transit agencies along the corridor to advance the vision outlined in the Master Plan, with a few major remaining projects highlighted on the map. In addition, WSDOT is working with its partners to implement smaller-scale projects to improve active transportation, local streets, and transit infrastructure that connects to the I-405 corridor.

Passenger-Only Ferries

There are currently seven passenger-only ferries in operation today, and the RTP includes three additional routes planned by 2050. However, there is continued interest in pursuing new routes in the future.

In 2021 PSRC completed the Puget Sound Passenger-Only Ferry (POF) Study to identify trends and assess potential new terminals and routes. The study began with 45 routes identified, 18 of which advanced through further analysis and of which ultimately seven routes were identified for more detailed review and assessment. These seven routes were:

- Tacoma to Seattle
- Bellingham to Friday Harbor
- South Whidbey to Everett
- Kenmore to Seattle
- Kirkland to Seattle
- Renton to Seattle (University of Washington and South Lake Union)

The study concluded with findings and considerations for implementation. More recently, WSDOT conducted a study in 2025 to evaluate options for the state to provide POF service to support existing WSF routes. The WSDOT study reviewed the seven routes from the PSRC study as well as routes in the San Juan Islands. Four potential routes moved into further evaluation: Whidbey Island to Everett, Bellingham to Friday Harbor, and two San Juan Islands Interisland service options. The report concludes with findings and options for consideration by the Legislature.

There are further planning efforts underway to consider additional POF routes in the future. For example:

- Kitsap Transit's "Intracounty Passenger-Only Ferry Project" is exploring alternatives for additional routes within Kitsap County. Initial routes identified for evaluation would connect Bremerton to Silverdale, Manchester and Bainbridge Island.
- The city of Des Moines has been studying POF service, and in 2022 conducted a pilot project to run a passenger-only fast ferry between the Des Moines Marina and Bell

Harbor Marina in Seattle. As part of the 2026-2027 Biennial Budget, King County approved an ordinance calling for an analysis of the potential for a triangle route to operate between Vashon, Des Moines and Pier 50 in Seattle.

- Pierce County has also been studying the potential for a future POF route between Tacoma and Seattle. In particular, a pilot project is being pursued that would use 100% electric hydrofoil vessels, the first in Washington State. The one-year pilot project would provide an assessment of potential ridership, tourism benefits and operational efficiencies for future planning and implementation.

Reimagining and Repurposing Infrastructure

As highway infrastructure built in the mid-20th century continues to age, many cities around the country are re-evaluating their design and function and considering how they can be altered or replaced in ways that better meet the needs of today's cities. Examples are widespread, from Boston's Central Artery/Tunnel Project, San Francisco's replacement of the Embarcadero Freeway, Chicago's waterfront Millennium Park covering a former rail corridor, to Dallas' Klyde Warren Park over the Woodall Rodgers Freeway.

The central Puget Sound region has numerous examples of reimagining aging infrastructure. One is the removal of the elevated SR 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle, which was replaced with a tunnel and a new Waterfront Park – over 20 acres stretching from Belltown to Pioneer Square that reconnect to city to the water, including playgrounds, public community piers, bike lanes, thousands of native plantings, public bathrooms, and more.

The Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park is built over rail lines. The I-90 lids on Mercer Island and in central Seattle provide room for parks and schools, and WSDOT is currently constructing a new freeway lid at Montlake Boulevard as part of the SR 520 bridge replacement project.

In recent years, similar community efforts to reimagine and repurpose sections of I-5 through central Seattle have emerged. Lid I-5 is a community-led effort to create 17 acres—or about eight city blocks—of new usable space over a section of freeway in central Seattle. As the city continues to grow, land is at a premium, and this group sees anticipated work to seismically retrofit an aging I-5 as an opportunity to advance other community objectives at the same time. They imagine space for parks, schools, and housing development that would reconnect the First Hill and Capitol Hill neighborhoods to downtown Seattle. The US Department of Transportation and WSDOT have contributed funding to continue studying these possibilities. Additional opportunities to create lids over other parts of I-5 or other freeways may be identified as communities throughout the region plan to accommodate growth or reconnect neighborhoods.