



REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2026–2050

SAFETY

May 2026



Puget Sound Regional Council



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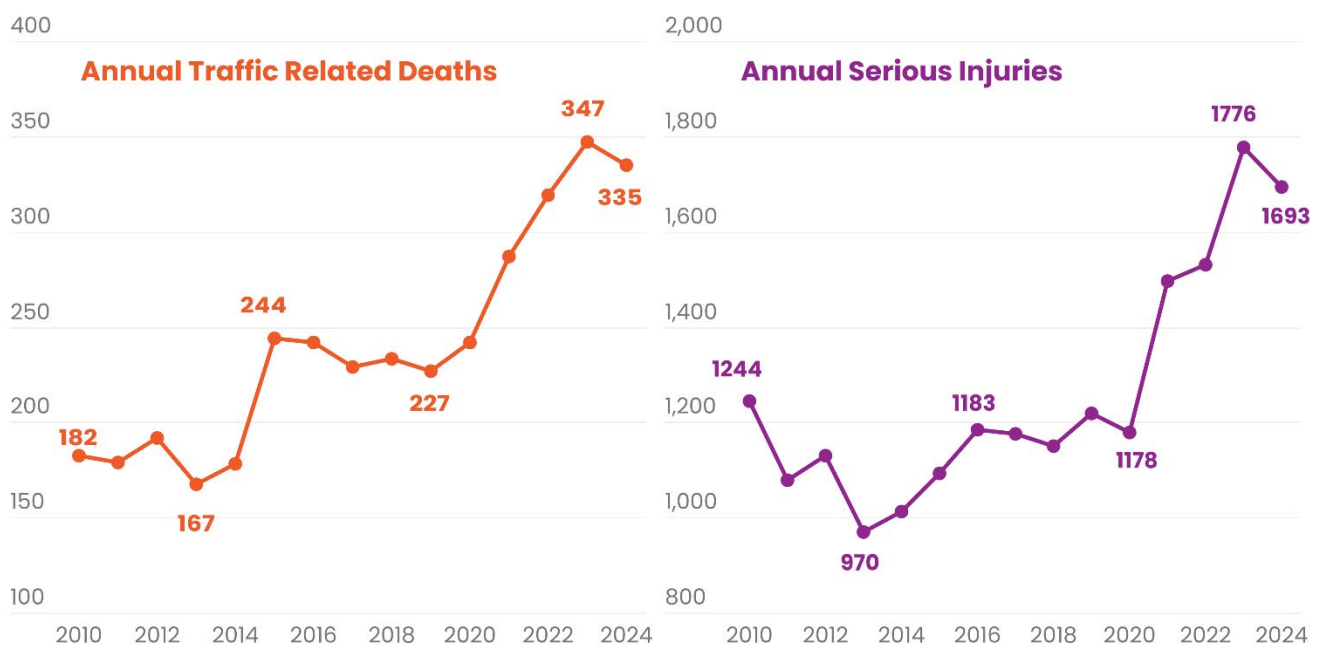
Puget Sound Regional Council
Information Center
1201 Third Avenue, Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98101-3055
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Safety

In our region, roadway deaths and serious injuries have sharply increased since 2010, especially among pedestrians and cyclists. To address this, transportation safety became a key focus area in [VISION 2050](#), the region’s overarching policy framework, which also includes a policy to support and achieve the state’s long-term goal of zero roadway deaths and serious injuries, adopted in the State of Washington’s [Target Zero](#) plan.

MPP T-4: *Improve the safety of the transportation system and, in the long term, achieve the state’s goal of zero deaths and serious injuries.*

Figure 1: Roadway Deaths and Serious Injuries in the Region, 2010-2024



In response, roadway safety has been one of the key policy focus areas for regional transportation planning since 2020. Acting on direction contained in the last Regional Transportation Plan, in 2025 PSRC adopted a [Regional Safety Action Plan](#) to improve traffic safety in the central Puget Sound region. The plan was created using a comprehensive, data-informed, equitable and collaborative approach, which:

- Fosters a regional culture of safety through increased awareness and focus on a Safe System Approach to protect vulnerable roadway users.
- Identifies safety issues and proven countermeasures, strategies, and tools.
- Is based on extensive research, analysis and public engagement.

- Complements the development of local safety action plans.
- Informs PSRC’s competitive project selection processes and the Regional Transportation Plan.

PSRC’s safety work follows the [U.S. Department of Transportation’s \(USDOT\) Safe System Approach](#), which takes a holistic view of improving traffic safety and mitigating risk. It anticipates human mistakes, acknowledges that humans are vulnerable, and promotes redundancies in traffic safety, so if a crash happens, it is less likely to be fatal. It considers the design, infrastructure, and systemic issues behind crashes.



Working Together to Implement the Regional Safety Action Plan

One of the key principles of the Safe System Approach is that “Responsibility is Shared.” Goals and guidance adopted in the RSAP are incorporated into this Regional Transportation Plan. They call for regional safety stakeholders – including all levels of government, private industry, and the general public—to take action to reverse the high level of deaths and serious injuries on our region’s roadways. While shared responsibility

does not necessarily mean equal responsibility, every stakeholder must do their respective part to improve traffic safety and achieve the state and regional policy goal of zero roadway deaths and serious injuries in our communities.

The RSAP provides a foundation and supportive tools for planning, prioritizing, and implementing projects, policies and programs that utilize the Safe System Approach to reduce deaths and serious injuries across the region. Consistent with the State of Washington, PSRC recognizes safer land use as an additional, integral component of a Safe System Approach.

Transportation safety more broadly encompasses elements aside from roadway traffic safety, including public transit, personal security, and safety issues related to modes such as freight, aviation, ferries, and rail. PSRC recognizes the importance of these issues, however they are outside the scope of PSRC’s safety work program. While PSRC develops strategies and guidance and can establish regional priorities, it is the responsibility of local transportation agencies to develop, implement, and operate safety projects and programs.

The RTP and the Regional Safety Action Plan are focused on roadway safety and do not include information regarding the numerous safety-related activities occurring in the region to improve the safety of users of the transportation system. One example of these efforts is King County’s Regional Transit Safety Task Force, which focuses on efforts to make sure that

riders feel safe and secure when accessing and taking transit. More information on the Regional Transit Safety Task Force can be found at <https://www.kingcountytransitsafetytaskforce.com/>

Technical Assistance

In addition to the RSAP, well over half of the region's 86 local jurisdictions either have adopted or are developing local safety action plans, focusing on unique local conditions at a finer scale than the regional transportation network. Through this framework of regional and local plans, member agencies should leverage the region's toolbox of proven strategies, data, and best practices (including key findings and emphasis areas) to identify a program of projects and initiatives that will efficiently and effectively address traffic safety within their jurisdiction.

For those jurisdictions who have not yet developed local plans, they can use the regional analysis and [High-Injury Network \(HIN\)](#) developed for the RSAP to supplement their own analysis and provide analytics where any gaps may currently exist. Data across all roadways is available for download from PSRC's website by any jurisdiction, and the RSAP can be used as a guide for using this localized data to apply the same principles to identify mitigating strategies for these local issues. With these and other resources, PSRC can provide technical assistance on an approach to developing focused local plans.

Project Selection and RTP Consistency Evaluation

PSRC will continue to emphasize safety throughout all aspects of regional planning processes, from the overall system goal as identified in VISION 2050, to the long-range planning and investments identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and through the more detailed project evaluation criteria that are used to award PSRC's federal transportation dollars to specific near-term transportation investments. An emphasis on a Safe System Approach has been and will continue to be incorporated into these PSRC policies and procedures. Most recently, the plan consistency framework applied to projects requesting submission into the RTP was updated to reflect the RSAP and state, regional and local HINs.

Convenings, Workshops, and Future Policy Direction

The RSAP includes design and engineering strategies as well as planning, policy and program strategies. However, there are many other policy, education and enforcement strategies outside of the scope of this RSAP that jurisdictions may wish to consider. For example, the Washington State Strategic Highway Safety Plan identifies a variety of policy suggestions related to legislation, enforcement, and education. PSRC will continue to monitor

the state of the practice and provide additional information to the boards on these topics for future discussions and updates to the RSAP.

PSRC's work program will not only periodically reassess safety conditions, but will build on the strategies and information contained in the RSAP to expand strategies, countermeasures, and information to help proactively eliminate deaths and serious injuries on the region's roadways. At PSRC board direction, this includes continued research, convenings and workshops on these and other roadway safety related topics.

Quick Build Program

As an early implementation action of the Regional Safety Action Plan, PSRC is exploring ways to support partner jurisdictions in each of the four counties to implement a series of quick-build demonstration projects throughout the region.

Quick-build demonstration projects are temporary installations to test new street design improvements that address safety and accessibility. They use low-cost materials such as paint, signs, pavement markings, plastic bollards, and movable planters to control intersections, narrow travel lanes, slow traffic, and create more space and visibility for people walking and biking. They are a great way to test new ideas and innovative best practices and build community support for more permanent solutions.

Monitoring and Tracking

PSRC will continue to track safety trends at the regional, state, and national levels. This includes regularly analyzing crash data, tracking emerging safety issues and community needs, and remaining up to date on the latest safety management practices and countermeasures. The RSAP identifies detailed metrics that PSRC has committed to track and report to the region.

Plan Update Schedule

PSRC plans to revisit and update the Regional Safety Action Plan every four years as part of the RTP development cycle. This will include:

- Updating the crash data analysis.
- Reassessing the emphasis areas, crash types, and contributing factors highlighted in the existing plan to determine if they are still the most pertinent.
- Updating the High-Injury Network to incorporate new data.
- Updating the strategies toolbox to reflect the evolving state of the practice and any changes to the plan's emphasis areas.