REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2026–2050

DRAFT

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE

Final Draft - April 2026

Puget Sound Regional Council

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CLIMATE

VISION 2050 sets out a goal for the region to substantially reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, in alignment with the adopted goals of the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA), and to prepare for climate change impacts. Climate change is influenced by all aspects of our daily lives – from the products we buy, to the places we live, to how we transport ourselves, among other things –and also has the potential to impact all aspects of our daily lives – from our health to our infrastructure, to the food we consume and the water we drink.

Recognizing this, VISION 2050 identifies multicounty policies and actions for the region and local governments to implement to address climate change — to both reduce emissions and to increase resilience to impacts – spanning all sectors.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

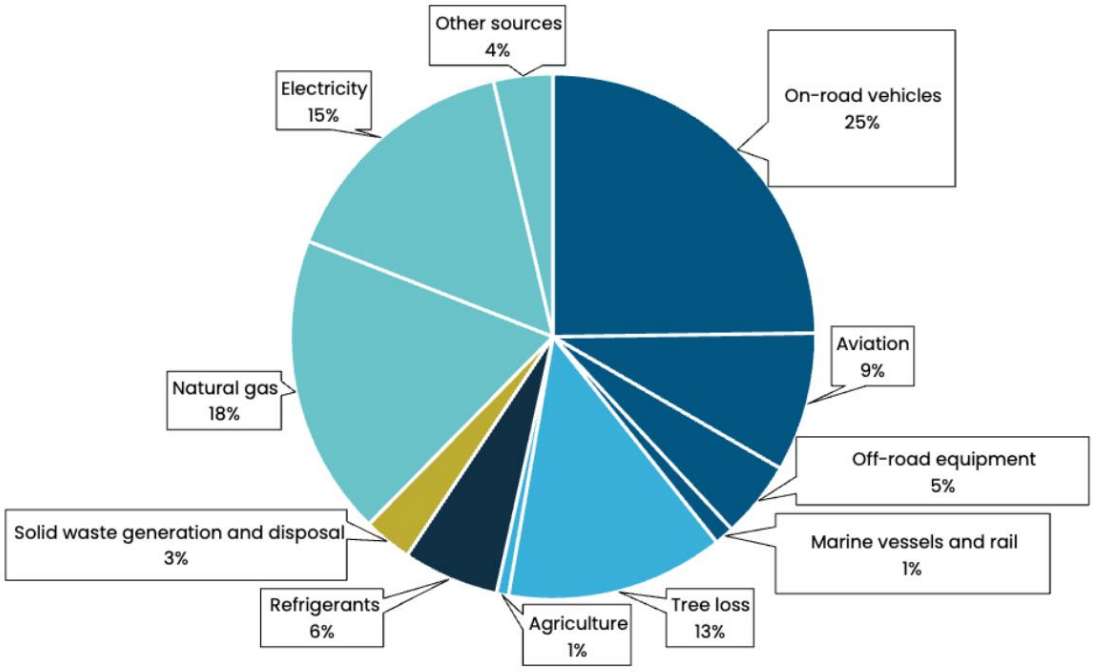
The most current state and regional climate goals are identified in the table below.

State Climate Goals	Regional Climate Goals*
By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions 45% below 1990 levels	By 2030, reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% below 1990 levels
By 2040, reduce greenhouse gas emissions 70% below 1990 levels	--
By 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions 95% below 1990 levels	By 2050, reduce greenhouse gas emissions 95% below 1990 levels

Regional Emissions Inventory

Addressing climate change requires an understanding of the sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the region. PSCAA - in partnership with PSRC, the four counties, major cities in the region and others - updated the regional emissions inventory in 2025 as part of the Puget Sound Region Final Comprehensive Climate Action Plan. More information on this plan is provided later in this document. The figure below illustrates the most recent greenhouse gas emissions inventory, based on 2022 data and reflecting all sectors.

Figure 1: Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Subsector in the Puget Sound Region, 2022



Source: Puget Sound Region Final Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, PSCAA, 2025

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

PSRC's analyses estimate emissions from on-road vehicles, which currently represent 25% of the region's total emissions inventory. VISION 2050 and the RTP focus on strategies and investments related to land use, transportation choices, pricing and decarbonization as the primary factors that influence greenhouse gas emissions from on-road transportation and are factors for which PSRC's planning efforts have either direct or indirect influence.

The RTP is the blueprint for the region's future transportation system and supports the regional growth strategy adopted in VISION 2050. Details on the significant expansion of the region's transit system, the active transportation plan and other multimodal investments can be found in the RTP Future Transportation System Report. Information on transportation financing and pricing strategies can be found in the Financial Strategy Report.

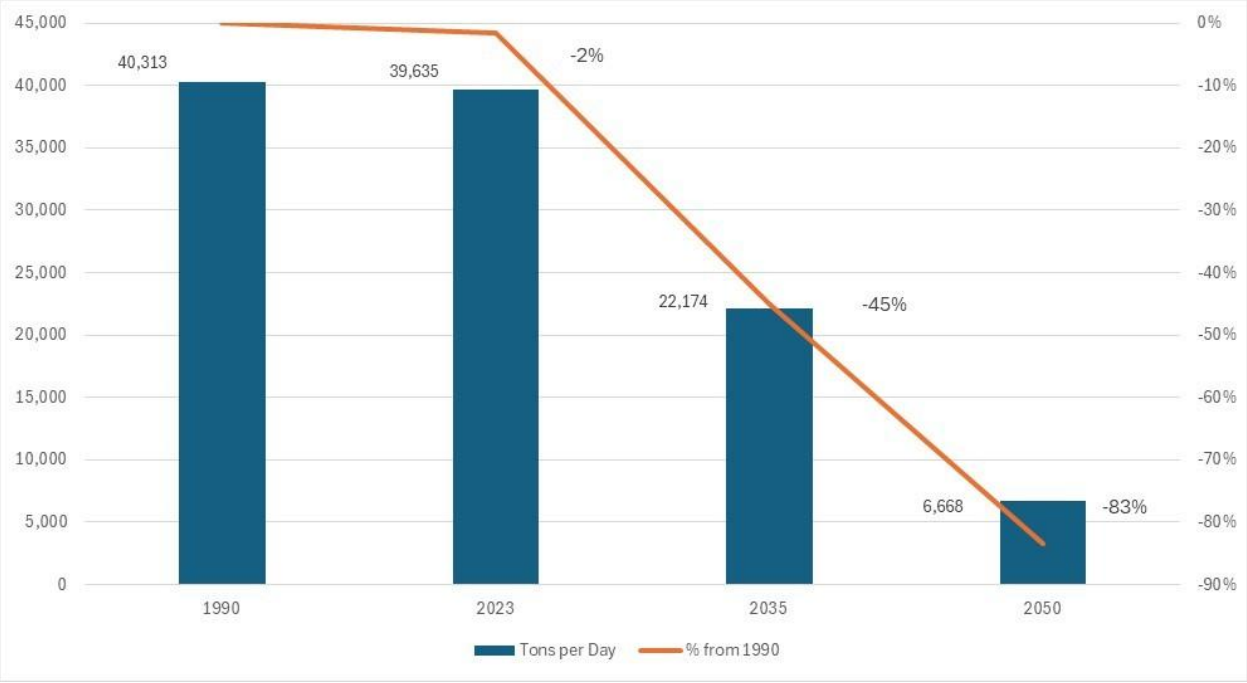
Related to decarbonization, the RTP includes built-in assumptions on the region's vehicle fleet today and into the future. These assumptions recognize the improvements to overall vehicle fuel economy over the last 15 years, as well as the fast-paced transition to zero emission vehicles over the last 5 years. According to the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, Washington State is second in the nation for electric vehicle (EV) market share, and King, Pierce and Snohomish counties have the highest shares of EVs in the state. By the end of 2024, almost half of all new vehicle registrations in the region were either battery-electric or

hybrid-electric vehicles. This transition to a zero emission transportation future is due in large part to significant state actions taken over the last several years, including the Clean Fuel Standard and four vehicle emissions standards for clean cars and trucks.

Even with potential changes at the federal level to vehicle emission standards and funding support, the momentum to transition the region's vehicle fleet to zero emission has begun and is moving quickly. According to the Electric Drive Transportation Association, as of June 2025 there were 178 EV models sold in the United States. Several sources including Car and Driver and U.S. News and World Report identify over 50 new models expected to be released in 2026.

With the investments in the RTP and the transition to a zero emission future, significant progress is being made in the on-road transportation sector towards achieving the climate goals as adopted by the state and region.

Figure 2: Progress Towards Climate Goals*



* carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from on-road mobile sources

Comprehensive Climate Action Plan

As noted earlier, PSCAA and a consortium of partners developed the first ever Puget Sound Region Final Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP). This effort was funded under the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program. The Washington State Departments of Ecology and Commerce also led a statewide consortium to develop the State Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.

The CCAP identifies a comprehensive list of strategies across six sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximize benefits in overburdened communities. It builds from and complements a significant amount of work already undertaken across the region and state, both in alignment with and reinforcing these existing climate planning efforts. The CCAP provides a blueprint for implementation of the actions necessary to achieve the regional and state climate goals.

Specific to transportation, the investments and assumptions in the RTP are reflected in the CCAP for the on-road transportation sector. The CCAP also acknowledges and identifies the extensive body of work both happening today and planned – and needed – for the future related to electrification of port infrastructure, freight vehicles, marine and rail systems, aviation, and many others. References to state actions and legislation, local climate plans, the Northwest Ports Clean Air Strategy and others are included in the plan.

Action

The region has set ambitious climate goals which will require equally ambitious actions to achieve. Significant efforts have been made over the last 20 years, but much more is needed. Together with VISION 2050, full implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan puts the region on track to substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions in support of these goals. The new CCAP provides the broader regional plan to reduce emissions across all sources and sets a clear path forward for what will be required.

As such, the RTP includes an action item calling for the region to "work together to meet adopted climate goals, advance implementation of the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan and to address climate impacts and vulnerabilities of the transportation system."

RESILIENCE

To respond to increased climate and environmental stressors, the Puget Sound region will need to continue developing the resilience of its infrastructure and ecosystems. PSRC defines resilience as "The ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from, or more successfully adapt to actual or potential adverse events."[1] Resilience efforts encompass preparing for impacts so that consequences of future adverse events are mitigated and ensuring the capacity to quickly recover to a "normal," pre-event state.

Building resilience in the region's transportation system encompasses a range of actions. Key among them is ensuring routes remain functional to support emergency response and

[1] https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/13457/disaster-resilience-a-national-imperative

food delivery by strengthening infrastructure to withstand hazard impacts and coordinating planning efforts, such as emergency routing plans for critical systems closures.

Developing resilience in the Puget Sound region is crucial for ensuring communities are, and remain, connected and prosperous. VISION 2050 recognized the importance of resilience and stresses the need to identify and address the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on water, land, infrastructure, health, and the economy while specifically paying attention to the effects on people of color, people with lower incomes, and other historically marginalized people in our region. PSRC works to advance the resilience goals of VISION 2050 through coordinating with partner agencies responsible for resilience and emergency planning and providing tools for local jurisdictions to focus their resilience efforts.

Key Hazards in the Puget Sound Region

The central Puget Sound region faces many environmental hazards. Washington State is particularly at risk of significant seismic hazards due to the presence of dozens of active faults, including the Cascadia subduction zone. Due to the proximity of several potentially active faults, the region faces elevated risks of shaking hazards. These also increase the risk of tsunamis, which are large, destructive waves caused by earthquakes, landslides, or volcanic eruptions, most commonly associated with geological events along coastal areas. Additionally, Washington is one of the most landslide-prone states in the country, according to the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Climate change poses many further challenges, including sea-level rise, more frequent and intense flooding, greater wildfire risk, increased temperatures, more variable precipitation and a host of other impacts to the region's climate and ecosystems. These climate change impacts will create widespread consequences for the built environment and transportation networks. Impacts will include accelerated deterioration of infrastructure, flooding of roadways and increased stormwater issues, more frequent landslides, rail buckling from higher temperatures and many other effects.

Key hazards in the central Puget Sound region are shown in PSRC's Puget Sound Regional Hazards Webmap. This web map allows users to explore potential hazard impacts across the region and better understand the threats the transportation system faces. Using the data shown in the web map, PSRC conducted a high-level analysis of potential hazard impacts to the regional transportation network. For example, 29% of the regional roadway network (principal arterials and above), 57% of bridges and 56% of high-capacity transit (HCT) routes are in areas with high liquefaction susceptibility[i]. Similarly, 3% of the regional roadway network, 31% of HCT routes and 6% of bridges are in tsunami hazard areas. PSRC will continue to explore other ways to use this data to advance our work to help the region better prepare for these impacts.

Existing Efforts and Resources

At all levels of government, work is underway to advance and promote resilience. Particularly relevant to the central Puget Sound region are the efforts of the Washington State Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Natural Resources and Ecology. Each of these agencies has produced a number of plans, studies and reports that assess the vulnerability of state assets and identify actions to improve the resilience of communities and infrastructure. Notable plans include the WA Department of Ecology's 2024 Climate Resilience Strategy and various WSDOT plans, including the Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP) currently underway.

In 2025, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) launched a Climate Resilient Communities Accelerator program for the South-Central Puget Sound region of Washington State. The accelerator program is a multi-year initiative bringing together leaders from a variety of sectors to organize and align efforts that build resilience to the impacts of extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

PSRC also continues to participate in the Puget Sound Climate Preparedness Collaborative (Collaborative). The Collaborative is made up of members from local and county governments, Tribes, regional agencies and other organizations in the central Puget Sound region that work together to build resilience to the impacts of climate change. The collaborative serves as a forum for peer learning and information exchange to foster regional climate preparedness.

The University of Washington's Climate Impacts Group (CIG) is a significant resource to the state, regional and local planning activities noted above. CIG advances climate resilience by conducting research on climate risks and enabling science-based action to manage them.

PSRC developed a climate change and resilience guidance document as part of the VISION 2050 Planning Resources for local jurisdictions. This guidance provides specific policies and examples for caring for the natural environment, regional coordination, protecting vulnerable communities, infrastructure resilience and more. This resource was intended to support local governments as they updated their comprehensive plans and implement their policies and actions.

What's ahead?

PSRC will continue to develop its resilience work program to support local jurisdictions and state efforts. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining the Puget Sound Regional Hazards Webmap, continuing to provide guidance for local jurisdictions, and exploring

opportunities to undertake a regional vulnerability assessment, learning from the work conducted by partner agencies around the state.

[i] Liquefaction susceptibility describes the potential for sand and silt in a particular area to take on the characteristics of a liquid. When liquefaction occurs, buildings and other structures can suffer major damage by partially or fully sinking into the ground surface. The ground surface may stay liquefied for several hours after shaking has stopped.