



Rural Town Centers & Corridors Program

Project Selection Workshop
January 28, 2026



Puget Sound Regional Council

Welcome to the 2026 Rural Town Centers and Corridors Project Selection Workshop

- Use the **Raise Hand function** if you would like to ask a question.
- Use the **Q&A function** if you have technical questions about Zoom.
- More information is available on PSRC's RTCC webpage at www.psrc.org/our-work/funding/project-selection/rural-town-centers-and-corridors
- The workshop recording and slides will be **posted to the RTCC webpage.**



Today's Agenda

- RTCC background
- Eligibility Requirements
- Screening Form process
- Evaluation Criteria
- Schedule
- Resources and Guidance
- Screening Form and Application Demo



Rural Town Centers & Corridors (RTCC) Program



- Established in 2004 to assist rural communities in implementing town center and corridor improvements
- Set-aside of regional portion of FHWA Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds
- \$6.07 million available, split between 2027 and 2028 program years – **may request up to full amount available for one year → \$3,035,000**

Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds

- Detailed policies and procedures for conducting the process
- Adopted by PSRC Executive Board prior to each funding cycle
- Funds distributed approximately every 2-3 years
 - Program funds into the future
 - Current process will distribute FFY 2027-2028 funds
- Based on VISION 2050 policies



Tracking of PSRC FHWA-Awarded Projects

Goal = Efficient use of PSRC funds

- Projects delivered in a timely manner, cost of delays are minimized
 - Annual delivery targets = “use it or lose it”
- **Project Tracking Policies** updated over time, address all funding programs and processes
- Progress report required once or twice per year from time of funding thru project completion
- Each project award tied to a specific fiscal year
 - **June 1st obligation deadline**
 - Opportunity to request a one-time extension if delay due to factors beyond the sponsor agency's control, subject to PSRC staff recommendation and board approval

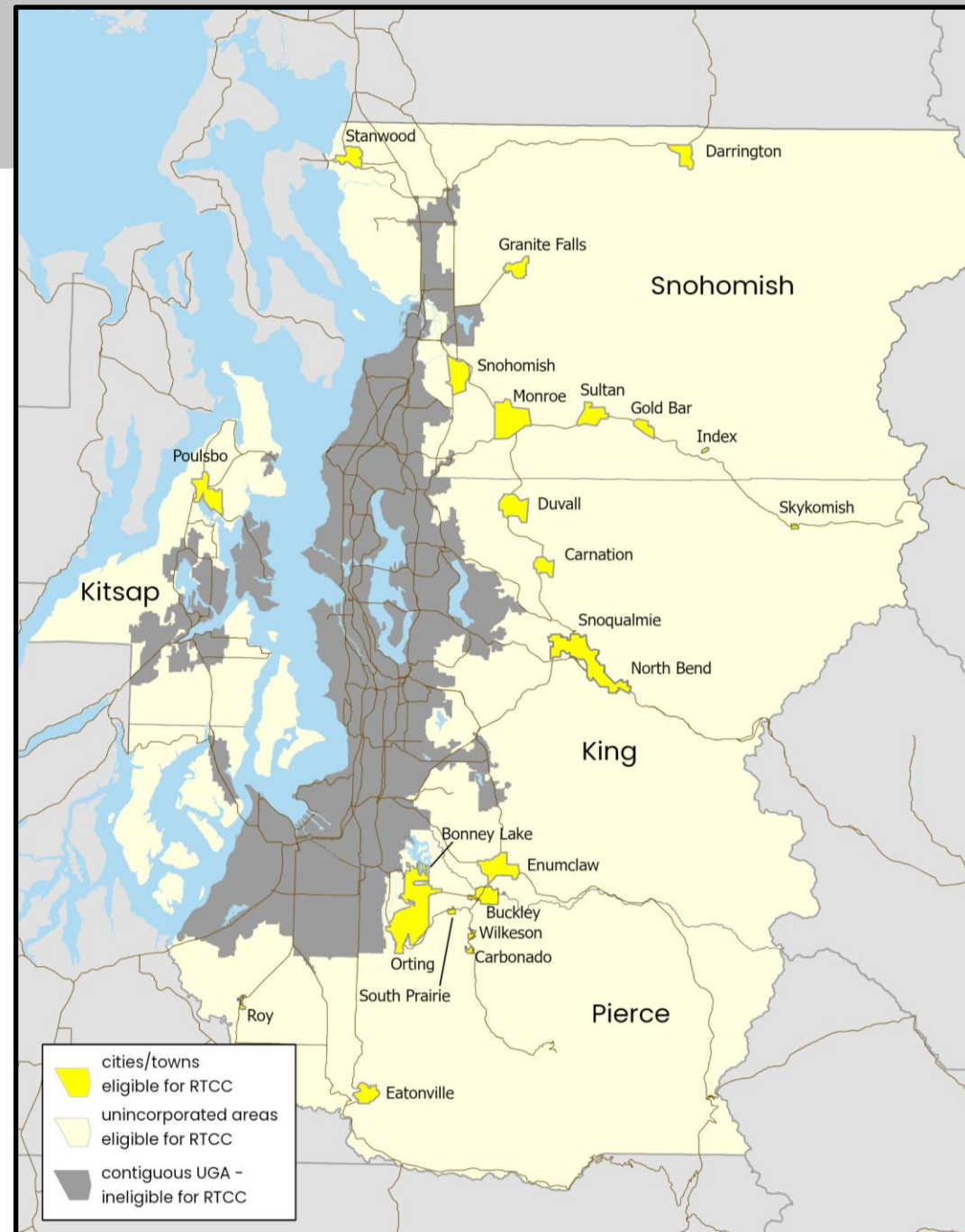
PSRC's FHWA obligation deadline is the date by which a *complete and accurate* funding authorization package must be submitted to the sponsor's WSDOT regional office.



Eligible Locations

To be eligible for RTCC funds, a project must be located *outside* of the region's contiguous Urban Growth Area (UGA)

 = contiguous UGA



Eligible Projects

- Project must be located within, or provide connection to, a rural town center
- Eligible project scope elements are any that would be eligible for STBG funds
 - ✓ See PSRC's [*FHWA and FTA Funding Source Eligibility*](#) for detailed descriptions

Eligible Project Types

May request RTCC funds for

- **Capital Transportation Project**
 - *Should be the outcome of a public planning process that is reflected in a local, regional, or state transportation plan*
- **Transportation Planning Study**
 - *Should include a clear definition of study components and support for the Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program objectives*

Other Eligibility Requirements

A project must...

- be consistent with the **Regional Transportation Plan**
- be consistent with **local comprehensive plan**
- meet **Federal Functional Classification** requirements or exceptions
- show consideration of **pedestrian & bicycle facilities**
- meet **PSRC** project readiness requirements
- meet **project finance** requirements



Major RTCC Components for Applicants

1. Screening Form

- Provide key information needed to confirm project eligibility
- Information reviewed by PSRC – sponsor provided opportunity to make corrections and clarifications

2. Funding Application

- Includes all screening form information with corrections & clarifications made
- Provide responses to evaluation criteria questions → Scored

3. Project Presentation

- Share project highlights and provide any last clarifications



Screening Form Purpose & Considerations

Purpose: Verify eligibility of a project to be awarded PSRC funds prior to completion of the full grant application.

Considerations

- For each project entered into the competition, a screening form **must be submitted by the deadline** and **approved by PSRC** prior to submitting the full funding application.
- Screening form deadline is **March 6**
- Screening Form Checklist & Guidance provided with the Call for Projects

PLEASE CHECK THE CHECKLIST!



Screening Form Process

1. Sponsor provides key eligibility information via screening form
2. PSRC staff reviews screening form information, and either
 - a) Determines project meets all eligibility requirements and approves, OR
 - b) Identifies areas where clarifications or corrections need to be made to confirm eligibility, and returns to sponsor to address

Sponsor must work with PSRC and fully resolve comments and questions before PSRC approval can occur

3. Submitted screening form information will be pre-filled when beginning project's full funding application

Sponsor may proceed with the funding application prior to approval if desired, but all screening form comments and questions must be resolved before submitting a full application



Screening Form Updates Since Last RTCC

- The information being requested has not changed
- Project Readiness / Financial Plan changed from scored criteria to eligibility criteria
- Project Readiness Guidelines established in 2024

PSRC comments and questions must be resolved and updates completed in the project application, before the application may be submitted



General Information

- **Project Title, Description & Location**
 - Please be clear and concise!
 - Project Description should include scope elements only – not project justification or benefits
- **Certification Acceptance (CA) Status**
 - Designated by WSDOT
 - CA status indicates sponsor agency has demonstrated understanding of federal rules regarding project development and administration
 - Project sponsors without CA status must enlist a CA sponsor agency – *confirmation from CA sponsor required*



Plan Consistency

- **Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

- Project \geq regional capacity project threshold = must be on the RTP's financially constrained (candidate or approved status) on the current Regional Capacity Project list
- Project $<$ regional capacity project threshold and consistent with regional policies = programmatic, and consistent with RTP

- **Local plans**

- Project must be in, or consistent with, a PSRC-certified (or conditionally certified) city or county comprehensive plan
- Project must be consistent with applicable transit and/or state plans
- State or transit project must also be consistent with local plan(s)



Federal Functional Classification

- A roadway must be approved on the federally classified roadway system before projects on it may use federal transportation funds
- OR, meet guidelines for exceptions
 - Any bicycle and/or pedestrian project
 - Project not on a roadway
 - Any transit project, including equipment purchase or park & ride lot
- Funds may be requested for a project on a roadway planned to be added to the functionally classified network but currently is not.

If funds are awarded, the jurisdiction must complete the federal functional classification change process—with FHWA approval completed—prior to obligating the funds.



Ped & Bike Consideration

- Per federal rules, pedestrian & bicycles must be considered in project development
 - Identify existing non-motorized facilities, and those included in project scope, or
 - If none exist or are proposed with the project, provide an explanation per the guidance provided in the checklist.



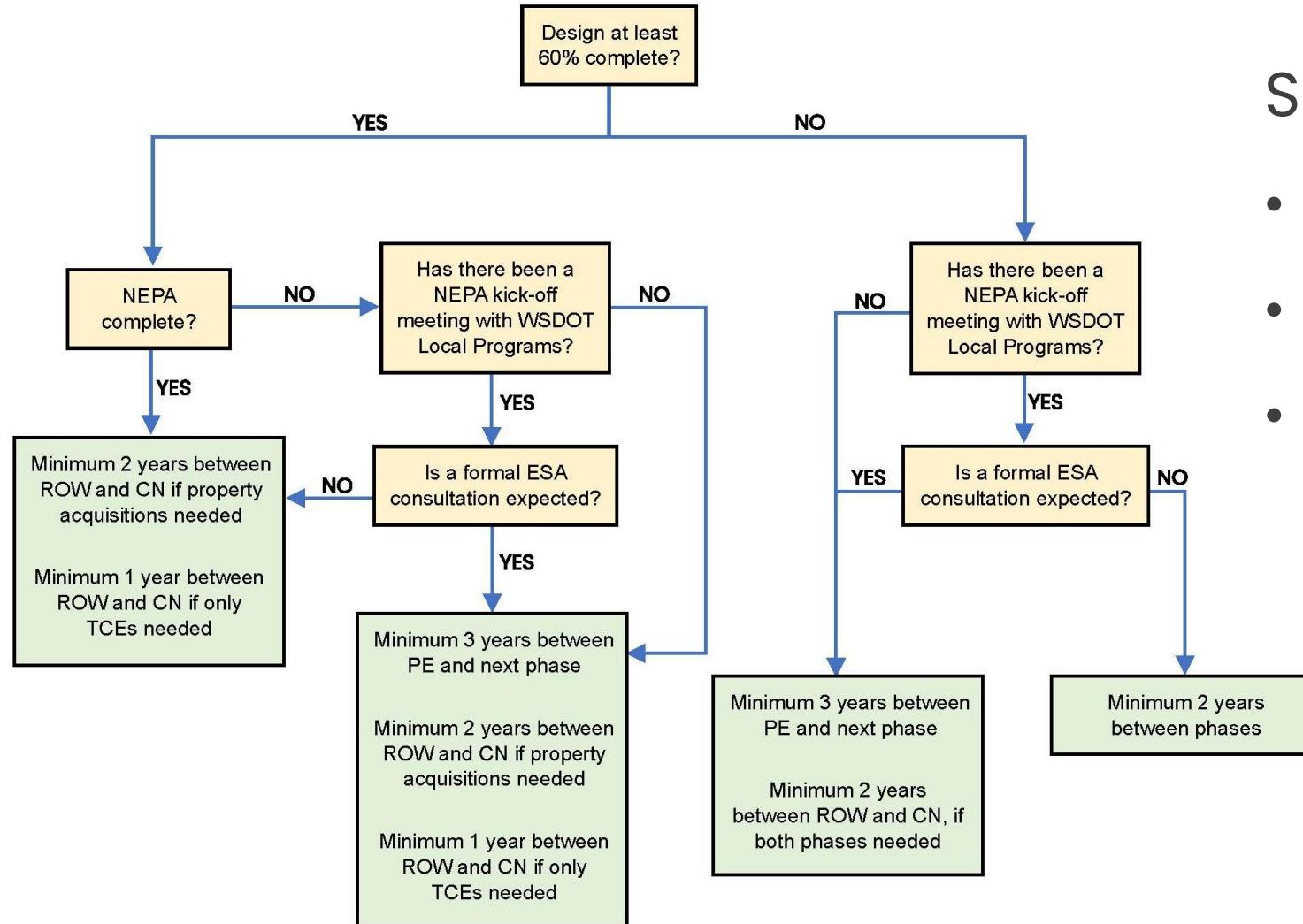
Project Readiness

Will the project be ready to use PSRC funds by the requested date?

- Must demonstrate that the major project milestones are scheduled sufficiently to allow the project to deliver on time.
- This includes
 - 1) understanding and identifying the obligation prerequisites that apply to the project,
 - 2) documenting the status of each at the time of application, and
 - 3) providing realistic completion dates for those not yet completed.
- PSRC has developed guidelines for minimum timelines between phases, based on analysis of delivery and extension request trends over last several years



Project Phase Minimum Timelines



Schedule depends on:

- Design status
- Permitting needs
- Right-of-Way needs

Project Phase Minimum Timeline Guidelines



Project Readiness Requirements



- Project schedule should reflect the minimum timeline defined in this guidance.
- If a sponsor indicates specific circumstances to justify a shorter project timeline, PSRC will review on a case-by-case basis in consultation with WSDOT to make an eligibility determination.

Reminder. Projects that progress faster than planned generally have opportunity to advance a phase to an earlier program year.



Project Finance

- Funding request...
 - Single phase only (e.g., design, right-of-way, or construction)
 - In combination plus all other funding must be adequate to fully fund the phase
 - Cannot exceed maximum request amount
 - Local match funds must be at least 13.5% of total phase cost
- Financial documentation...
 - Must show that, in combination with the requested funds, all other funds needed to implement the requested phase are secured or reasonably expected
 - *Detailed [financial constraint guidance](#) provided on PSRC website*
- Full project budget, including secured and/or anticipated funding sources, must be provided



Evaluation Criteria Components

**Local & Regional Policy
Support**

Mobility & Accessibility

**System Performance &
Innovative Solutions**

Community Support

Safety



Criteria – Local & Regional Policy Support

Local & Regional Policy Support

Mobility & Accessibility

System Performance & Innovative Solutions

Community Support

Safety

Describe how project will

- support adopted rural town center policies, or advances vision for rural town center
- fit with the intended character of rural town center or corridor
- describe any interjurisdictional partnership / coordination



Criteria – Mobility & Accessibility

Local & Regional Policy Support

Mobility & Accessibility

System Performance & Innovative Solutions

Community Support

Safety

Describe how the project will:

- improve access to, or circulation within, the rural town center
- benefit a range of travel modes
- improve the pedestrian environment
- contribute to TDM / CTR opportunities



Criteria – System Performance

Local & Regional Policy Support

Mobility & Accessibility

System Performance & Innovative Solutions

Community Support

Safety

Describe how the project will:

- improve reliability and efficiency for moving people, freight and goods
- provide a long-term solution to maximize efficiency of the transportation system

Describe any particularly innovative elements included in the project



Criteria – Community Support

Local & Regional Policy Support

Mobility & Accessibility

System Performance & Innovative Solutions

Community Support

Safety

Identify:

- Population groups to be served by the project
- Gaps in transportation system / services
- How project will address these gaps

Describe:

- Outreach process
- How outreach influenced development of the project

Criteria – Safety

Local & Regional Policy Support

Mobility & Accessibility

System Performance & Innovative Solutions

Community Support

Safety

Describe how the project will

- address safety and/or security issues
- protect vulnerable users
- reduce reliance on enforcement and/or design for decreased speeds
- how the project relates to agency's adopted safety plan and/or policies



Schedule

- **January 20** – Release Call for Projects
- **January 28** – RTCC workshop
- **March 6** – Eligibility screening forms due to PSRC
 - *PSRC staff review – ‘first come, first served’*
 - *Comments returned no later than March 27*
- **April 17** – Project applications due to PSRC
- **May 6** – Sponsor presentations to RTCC Project Selection Committee
- **May 26 (& 27 if needed)** – Project Selection Committee meetings
- **June – July** – Public Comment & Board Review/Approval
- **July–September** – Program awards into Regional and State TIP



Resources and Guidance

Provided on RTCC web page:

- Checklists with detailed instruction & guidance
 - *Screening Form*
 - *Application*
- Eligibility Information
- Project Evaluation Criteria
- Financial Constraint Guidance

Rural Town Centers and Corridors

[Home](#) > [Our Work](#) > [Funding](#) > [Project Selection](#)
> Rural Town Centers and Corridors

PSRC's Rural Town Centers and Corridors Program provides funding for projects in smaller towns and cities in rural areas of the region. This program was established by PSRC to recognize and support the needs of the region's rural areas.

The 2026 RTCC project selection process is currently underway. PSRC invites agencies with eligible projects to submit applications for the \$6.07 million available through this program.

Interested project sponsors must complete an **eligibility screening form** by **March 6, 2026**. Project applications must be submitted to PSRC by **April 17, 2026**.

Program information including eligibility, schedule, criteria, and grant application is provided below.



Online Screening Form and Application

PSRC's 2026 Rural Town Centers & Corridors Program Screening Form

The following eligibility screening form is intended for sponsors that are interested in competing in PSRC's 2026 Rural Town Centers and Corridors program. Interested project sponsors must complete an eligibility screening form by **11:59 pm, March 6, 2026**.

A [checklist and resource document](#) has been developed to assist in verifying a project's eligibility for these funds, and provide instruction and links to resources needed to complete the screening form.

For questions about the 2026 Rural Town Centers and Corridors program, please contact Doug Cox at (206) 971-3050 or DCox@psrc.org.

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Questions?



Thank You!

Doug Cox

dcox@psrc.org
(206) 971-3050

Jennifer Barnes

jbarnes@psrc.org
(206) 389-2876



Puget Sound Regional Council