Federal Requirements

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) serves as the region's long-range transportation plan under federal and state law. The RTP meets the substantive and procedural requirements of Title 23 Section 450.324 of the Code of Federal Regulations and Section 47.80.030 of the Revised Code of Washington.

Federal Planning Factors

The RTP addresses the federal planning factors as identified in Title 23 Section 450.306(b). The following section summarizes how the factors were considered and incorporated into the RTP.

(1) Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

Based on goals adopted in VISION 2050, the central Puget Sound region's adopted growth, economic, and transportation strategy, the RTP was designed to improve mobility for our growing region and ensure that all people benefit from the region's transportation system.

The transportation network was designed to support the Regional Growth Strategy, with particular emphasis on connecting designated Regional Growth Centers, Manufacturing / Industrial Centers, employment centers, and other regional attractions and amenities with a variety of transportation modes to ensure that they are able to thrive.

The RTP describes how the region's existing and planned roadways, public transportation, aviation system, deep water ports, and rail networks connect job centers and residential areas, both within the region and to the world. These transportation systems will ensure the efficient and convenient movement of people and goods to support and sustain the region's growing economy. See the Current Transportation System and Future Transportation System reports and visualization tools, as well as the System Performance report, for detailed analysis of the improved performance of the region's future transportation system from the planned transportation projects and services in the RTP.

(2) Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

Roadway safety has been one of the key policy focus areas for regional transportation planning since 2020. Acting on direction contained in the region's last RTP, in 2025 PSRC adopted a Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) to improve traffic safety in the central Puget Sound region. The RSAP was created using a comprehensive, data informed, collaborative approach, which fosters a regional culture of safety through increased awareness and focus on a Safe System Approach to protect vulnerable roadway users. Safety is one of the six core RTP Foundations, which incorporates RSAP findings and recommendations. In addition, safety is a key policy measure through which Regional Capacity Projects are reviewed under the Regional Transportation Plan Consistency Framework for Regional Capacity Projects.

(3) Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.

The RTP addresses security through three key areas:

1. **Safety:** Safety is one of the foundational areas of the RTP. Refer to (2) above for more information and links.
2. **Technology and Operations:** Counties, cities, transit agencies, ports and the state each have their own operational procedures for ensuring the security of the system, the costs of which are included in the RTP financial strategy as programmatic costs. For example, the Washington State Ferries follows a U.S. Coast Guard approved safety and security plan, and the region's transit agencies have various safety and security protocols and activities. From the American Society of Civil Engineers, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) "can be a cost-effective means to improve safety, optimize transportation control, performance, and operation, minimize congestion, and increase security while providing real time information to aid in route and travel mode choice and planning."[1] In addition, these systems include and manage significant amounts of data and information technology that protect and secure the transportation system. Further, new vehicles are being designed

[1] https://www.asce.org/advocacy/policy-statements/ps454---intelligent-transportation-systems

and built with increasingly sophisticated technologies that address safety and security for the traveling public. ITS and technology elements in the region are described in the Current Transportation System and Future Transportation System reports.

3. **Resilience:** The Climate & Resilience Report describes approaches to increasing the resilience of the region's transportation system, as well as ongoing efforts throughout the region and guidance resources developed for VISION 2050 implementation. PSRC also developed an interactive Regional Hazards Map to identify various hazard and transportation data layers across the Puget Sound region. The map shows the areas of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties vulnerable to various hazards to help inform the design and implementation of more resilient transportation infrastructure. Additional work to advance resilience of the transportation system is ongoing.

(4) Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.

The wide variety of multimodal improvements detailed in the RTP are designed to increase accessibility to locations, services, and activities throughout the region and improve mobility for people and goods. These include a greatly expanded public transportation system, with an emphasis on improved transit access, planned improvements to the regional freight network, a detailed Coordinated Mobility Plan to identify improvements and services for those with mobility challenges, as well as projects to address system gaps and bottlenecks that pose challenges today. See the Future Transportation System report and visualization tool, and the System Performance report for detailed analysis of the improved mobility performance of planned transportation projects and services in the RTP.

(5) Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.

The RTP is designed to serve the existing and planned land uses and activities contained in the region's local comprehensive plans, adopted by the region's four counties and 82 cities and towns under the Washington State Growth Management Act and guided by the region's VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy. The RTP further supports the overall goal that "*the region has a sustainable, equitable, affordable, safe and efficient multimodal transportation system, with specific emphasis on an*

integrated regional transit network that supports the Regional Growth Strategy and promotes vitality of the economy, environment and health."

With state-mandated periodic updates, cities and counties were required to update these plans by December 2024. These local plans must conform with state requirements to identify and protect environmentally critical and sensitive areas, promote energy conservation, and support the creation of vibrant, healthy communities.

In addition, the RTP was guided by the planning and projects adopted in the recently updated Washington State Highway System Plan, the Washington State Ferry System Plan, and the adopted long-range system plans of the region's seven public transportation agencies. Specific investments can be viewed in the Future Transportation System Report and Visualization Tool, and are described further in the Regional Capacity Projects List.

The investments in the RTP are analyzed to ensure that the region conforms with the Washington State Implementation Plan (SIP) as required by the federal Clean Air Act and the state Clean Air Washington Act. This includes an analysis demonstrating that on-road transportation emissions are projected to be below the motor vehicle emissions budgets specified in the SIP. PSRC has determined the RTP conforms to federal and state air quality conformity requirements.

In addition, a regional emissions analysis is done for a variety of air pollutants. As illustrated in the System Performance Report, a substantial reduction in emissions is expected by 2050 with implementation of the RTP.

(6) Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.

The discussion under Planning Factor 4 above describes the projects, plans, and services designed to create an accessible transportation system, increase choices, and promote regional mobility for people and goods through the development of an integrated multimodal regional transportation system.

Development of the RTP began with an extensive inventory of the multimodal system. Mapping and analyzing the resulting data helped identify needs and gaps for different parts of the system. A similar assessment was conducted for the future transportation system, reflecting the planned investments and services in the RTP.

See the Current Transportation System Report, Future Transportation System Report, Visualization Tools, and the Regional Capacity Projects List.

(7) Promote efficient system management and operation.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are technologies that help the transportation system operate more efficiently and effectively. By doing so, they have the potential to improve mobility, increase safety, and reduce emissions. These technologies are multimodal and apply to personal vehicles, transit, freight modes, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists. The extent and capabilities of current ITS technologies was inventoried and analyzed in the Current Transportation System Report, with opportunities for system improvements identified in the Future Transportation System Report.

(8) Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

Maintenance and Preservation of the region's transportation system is one of the six core Foundations of the Regional Transportation Plan and is identified as one of the plan's highest priorities. Consequently, over 60% of plan investments are targeted for Maintenance and Preservation of the system, addressing existing backlogs and maintaining the system to a state of good repair into the future. See the Maintenance & Preservation report.

(9) Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.

In addition to the components described in Planning Factor 5, the plan addresses water pollution associated with the transportation system. These include vehicles and trains that contribute pollutants from tire and brake pad wear, washing detergents, and oil leaks. Airports contribute de-icing compounds and oil and fuel leaks. Impervious surfaces from the transportation system, such as parking lots, maintenance yards, and roads, collect these pollutants and often deliver them directly to streams, lakes, and other water bodies. Implementing the RTP provides an opportunity to improve water quality in the region when a variety of strategies and best practices are used. See the Water Quality report.

To respond to increased climate and environmental stressors, the Puget Sound region will need to continue developing the resilience of its infrastructure and ecosystems. The Climate & Resilience Report describes approaches to increasing the resilience of the region's transportation system.

In addition, PSRC developed an interactive Regional Hazards Map to identify various hazard and transportation data layers across the Puget Sound region. The map shows the areas of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties vulnerable to various hazards to help inform the design and implementation of more resilient transportation infrastructure.

(10) Enhance travel and tourism.

The RTP identifies a wide variety of multimodal improvements that will enhance regional travel and tourism. These include new and improved infrastructure to help people travel to the region, such as the Aviation system, Intercity Rail and Intercity Bus services. The plan identifies a Washington State sponsored project to develop a Cascadia High Speed Rail corridor, linking the region to the Portland, OR and Vancouver, B.C. metropolitan areas. The plan identifies important access improvements to the region's ports that act as a gateway for a vibrant and growing cruise ship industry, with destinations including Alaska, Asia, and California.

Within the region, well-integrated and connected public transit services such as light rail, bus rapid transit, and local transit will provide excellent and convenient access to the region's attractions, such as civic centers, sports arenas, arts venues, landmarks, and retail centers. Improvements to the ferry system, roads and highways will ensure reliable access to all of the above, as well as to regional, state, and national parks, popular destinations that bring people to the central Puget Sound region.

All of these transportation improvements are described in the Future System Report and Visualization Tool.

Congestion Management Process

The Federal Highway Administration defines the Congestion Management Process (CMP) as "a systematic and regionally accepted approach for managing congestion that provides accurate, up-to-date information on transportation system performance and assesses alternative strategies for congestion management that meets state and local needs." Each metropolitan planning organization the size of PSRC is federally mandated to develop and implement a CMP consistent with the requirements established in 23 CFR 450.322.

The following summarizes how the RTP addresses the required CMP elements, including the monitoring and evaluation of system performance; identification of

strategies and their effectiveness; performance measures developed in coordination with state and local partners; a program for data collection; identification of schedules, roles and responsibilities, and funding sources for implementation strategies; and periodic assessments for future evaluation.

In the central Puget Sound region, the CMP is integrated throughout all planning stages rather than conducted as a stand-alone process. PSRC uses interactive transportation system visualization tools to inform the CMP, which provide users with the ability to view regional performance data according to parameters that are adaptable to other regional corridor and sketch planning efforts. This approach allows regional performance data not only to be considered throughout the PSRC planning process, but also to be integrated into other efforts throughout the region. There are visualization tools available for both the Current Transportation System and the Future Transportation System.

As described elsewhere in this document, the RTP includes significant investments that address congestion, mobility, access, and transportation demand management. The Future Transportation System report describes these investments in greater detail, and the Regional Capacity Projects List provides a detailed listing of all regionally significant projects in the RTP, including scope, lead agency and cost information among other data points. Further, each project was evaluated against the Regional Transportation Plan Consistency Framework for Regional Capacity Projects, which includes measures related to Economic Vitality, Environment and Resilience, Mobility and Accessibility, and Safety and Opportunity.

The System Performance Report provides detailed analysis across an extensive suite of performance measures, including but not limited to measures related to vehicle miles traveled, vehicle hours of delay, miles of travel in heavy or severe congestion, travel time for major corridors and many others. The region is projected to see an increase in both population and employment of 33% by 2050, however growth in total VMT is 20%, and VMT per capita is reduced 12% by 2050. While overall hours of delay increase by 2050, annual hours of delay per capita increase by a much smaller percentage; in Metropolitan Cities annual hours of delay per capita are projected to be lower in 2050. The plan results in almost a tripling of transit trips by 2050 and significant growth in walking and biking trips, shifting modes of travel away from single occupancy vehicle trips.

In addition, an analysis of current and future system needs was conducted as part of development of the RTP, and the visualization tools and transportation system reports identify where additional needs may still exist within the context of local conditions for further planning. The RTP Performance Dashboard also provides ongoing data trends for several key policy priorities and desired outcomes from the RTP – e.g., related to travel time, transit ridership, safety, walking and biking, emissions and others. The Dashboard is updated on a regular basis, with annual reports to PSRC's boards.

The full suite of these documents and tools - including robust analysis, planning and investments - serves to function as the CMP for the region. Per 23 CFR 450.322, the RTP results in a multimodal transportation system with performance measures and strategies, ongoing monitoring and coordination with partner agencies. Strategies include those emphasized in legislation – reducing single occupant vehicle travel, system management and operations, integration between modes and supporting nonmotorized travel.

Federal Performance Targets

Under federal law, Metropolitan Planning Organizations like PSRC are also required to establish regional performance targets related to an array of topic areas. These targets were developed in coordination with WSDOT and the region's transit agencies. The System Performance Report includes the current targets for both FTA and FHWA measures, as well as information on the most current, and next scheduled, milestone reporting.