



February 28, 2022

Ms. Kelly McGourty  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
1011 Western Avenue, Suite 500  
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: City of Bellevue Comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan 2022-2050

Dear Ms. McGourty:

The City of Bellevue is pleased to provide comments on the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC) draft Regional Transportation Plan 2022-2050 (RTP). As a region, we have both the opportunity and the challenge to harness our tremendous population and economic growth to improve the quality of life. Nowhere is this truer than in the City of Bellevue.

The City is encouraged to see the robust engagement process used by PSRC and appreciates the extensive process undertaken by the Transportation Policy Board and supporting committees to advance these important issues, including those highlighted below. In addition, staff has specific technical comments that are included as an attachment to this letter.

### **Safety**

We appreciate this new section of the draft RTP and support PSRC's work to emphasize safety throughout all aspects of the planning process, including detailed project evaluation criteria used to award federal transportation dollars. The draft RTP serves as an important tool to implement VISION 2050's policy to "improve the safety of the transportation system and, in the long term, achieve the state's goal of zero deaths and serious injury."

However, Bellevue finds that the RTP should more fully embrace safety through a regional policy commitment to a ***safe systems approach***. The draft RTP states that while significant progress on reducing traffic fatalities and serious injuries has been made in the region, a lot of work still must be done. Recent trends show pedestrian fatalities or serious injuries at a 27 percent increase in the region between 2010 – 2019. In the first six months of 2021, an estimated 20,160 people died nationwide in vehicle crashes, up 18.4 percent over 2020. We can and must do more to reverse this trend.

[Bellevue's Vision Zero initiative](#) to eliminate traffic deaths and serious-injury collisions on City streets by 2030 is a testament to that commitment. To achieve that target, the City has put in place policies, plans and programs to improve safety for the traveling public. Bellevue has adopted a safe systems approach that focuses on safe people, safe streets, safe speeds, and safe vehicles. In recent years, our City Council approved the Vision Zero framework in 2015; residents voted for a

Neighborhood Safety, Connectivity and Congestion Levy in 2016; and, our City Manager approved a [Vision Zero Strategic Plan](#) in 2020.

To keep Bellevue's Vision Zero effort on track and to monitor progress, a cross-departmental team of staff develop annual action plans. The [2022 plan](#) includes 18 actions, brief descriptions, targets and key performance indicators to measure progress.

Before the RTP becomes final, PSRC should:

1. Adopt a goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries with a Safe Systems Approach as the region's guiding paradigm to address roadway safety. Adopting a Safe Systems Approach would demonstrate alignment with the United States Department of Transportation's (USDOT) National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS), published January 2022. Such a policy would also align the RTP with the [Washington State Target Zero Plan](#) (TZP) and demonstrate implementation of VISION 2050.
2. Commit to developing a regional safety work plan that identifies specific actions, targets, and key performance indicators to measure progress. PSRC might consider candidate actions taken by other Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in the USDOT's [Transportation Safety Planning and the Zero Deaths Vision: A Guide for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Local Communities](#).
3. Once actions are identified, publish an annual progress report to track performance. This could include an evaluation of the safety revisions included in the project selection process, as identified in the draft RTP.
4. Pursue additional resources through outside funding programs to implement new safety projects and programs in alignment with VISION's goal of zero deaths and serious injury. This should include leveraging the \$6 billion Safe Streets and Roads for All grant included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**

TDM is essential for making efficient use of transportation infrastructure and maximizing the benefit of a multimodal transportation system. The City agrees with the draft RTP's call for regional and local comprehensive plans to consider TDM at planning, programming, and implementation stages, thus integrating TDM more fully into the transportation landscape.

The City supports the draft RTP's language about TDM equity considerations and modernization of the Commute Trip Reduction law. Expanding the CTR program's focus to include commutes outside of peak hours could help increase employer-provided commute subsidies for workers with lower incomes. The City also agrees with increasing TDM program data collection and evaluation.

### **Technology**

Bellevue appreciates PSRC's work, including development of the regional traffic signal/Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) inventory, to ensure the regional transportation system increases overall system efficiency. A state-of-the art intelligent transportation system minimizes traveler wait times and frustrations, as people are safely moved through the region.

Before the RTP becomes final, PSRC should:

- 1) Highlight the emergence of Autonomous Vehicles (AV) in the region, which is highly influenced by private sector investment. Other cities, such as San Francisco have seen widespread deployment of AVs on City streets.
- 2) Highlight the opportunity for agencies to leverage new data source options. Data platforms are becoming increasingly more useful with their ability to leverage probe-based data sources at scale and provide valuable insights. The need for agencies to collect their own data could diminish with data platforms like Iteris Clearguide, Streetlight Data, and Wejo.
- 3) Indicate a plan to update data included in the Transportation System Visualization Tool, including the regional traffic signal/ITS inventory to help support and inform regional and local ITS planning.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian**

The City strongly supports the draft RTP's call for investment in well-connected bicycle and pedestrian networks that provide access to transit. PSRC's visualization tool that builds an inventory of sidewalks, bicycle and shared use paths will benefit our region as we work to implement the RTP through 2050. We will need to work together to meet VISION 2050's goal for 65% of the region's population growth and 75% of the region's employment growth to be located within walking distance of high-capacity transit by 2050.

Before the RTP becomes final, PSRC should:

- 1) Be clearer that the draft RTP calls for increased emphasis on projects that will help meet VISION 2050's walk distance goal to high-capacity transit.
- 2) Provide additional information about the region's safety goals as referenced on page 61, including how the safety goals relate to Chapter 1.2.3 (Safety).

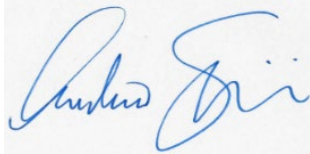
### **Financial Strategy**

Stable funding is essential for a high-quality regional transportation system, including roads, transit, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. Funding sources were an area of importance to Bellevue when the Regional Transportation Plan 2018 was approved, including the need to understand the role of a potential expansion of transportation user fees. Since that time, study has occurred, yet legislative action has stymied.

The draft RTP relies on ambitious financing assumptions, such as a road usage charge. However, significant financial assumptions deserve a comprehensive work plan from PSRC to help members evaluate the impact to the RTP and regional transportation network if assumed new revenues are not available.

PSRC's work in developing the RTP is certain to help provide robust data and guidance to inform the City's comprehensive plan update by 2024. We appreciate the dedicated time and consideration that went into the draft RTP, and we stand ready to assist in advancing the recommendations above through the review process.

Sincerely,



Andrew Singelakis, AICP  
Director, Transportation Department

Attachment

cc: Katie Halse, Transportation Policy Advisor

## Attachment A: City of Bellevue Technical Comments

The following technical edits are recommended before the RTP becomes final:

- 1) **Technology:** On page 96, the following sentence should be clarified: “when two or more signals along a corridor have synchronized timing cycles, minimizes the number of times motorists, transit vehicles, and bicyclists must stop when traveling along a corridor.”
- 2) **Technology:** Consider rewording the term “linger” in the following sentence: “Coordinated signals along intersection-dense corridors improve safety for all modes by reducing the amount of time spent lingering at busy intersections.”
- 3) **Technology:** Consider characterizing Adaptive Signal Control technology as a signal control system that is “demand-responsive” as opposed to describing it as technology that can adjust signal timing “on the fly.”
- 4) **Technology:** Add traffic cameras to the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) assets list on page 96. The traffic camera is one of the key tools used by traffic management staff in the region because they provide situational awareness.
- 5) **Technology:** Car2Go and Chariot are referenced on page 99; however, they are no longer in service.
- 6) **Technology:** PSRC’s Transportation System Visualization Tool and the regional traffic signal/ITS inventory referenced on page 95 is missing intersections in Bellevue, including the intersections along 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street.
- 7) **TDM:** On page 89, the term “CTR-affected programs” is used. Instead, this terminology should be “CTR programs,” to avoid confusion. “CTR-affected” is terminology that typically applies to a worksite, not a program.
- 8) **Bicycle/Pedestrian:** Add language in the plan that defines the walking and bicycling distance assumed to achieve the goal (as opposed to a reference in Appendix H).