



Puget Sound Regional Council

Transportation Operators Committee Agenda

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Online Meeting Only: Use Zoom Connection Information Provided Below

1. Welcome and Introductions (10:00) – Peter Heffernan, Chair (King County Metro)

2. Action: Approval of Meeting Summary – January 24, 2024* (10:05)

3. Transportation Policy Board Debrief (10:10)

The 'At Work' reports for the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) meetings are available on the PSRC website at: <https://www.psrc.org/board/transportation-policy-board>. The latest Transportation Work Program progress reporting summary is available on pages 36-37 of the February 8, 2024 TPB agenda packet: <https://www.psrc.org/media/8418>.

4. Discussion: PSRC Transportation Committee Assessment (10:15)

PSRC has been conducting an assessment of the eight current transportation committees for efficiencies and to maximize regionwide engagement opportunities. Staff will share the results of this assessment as it relates to the multiple transit-related committees. More time will be scheduled on the March 27th meeting for follow-up on this topic.

5. Discussion: Guidance for FTA Equity Formula Funds* (10:25)

In preparation for the 2024 Project Selection process for FTA funds, PSRC has updated the guidance for the distribution of FTA Equity Formula funds based on feedback provided by the TPB, as further detailed in the attachment.

6. Action: Updates to PSRC Project Tracking Policies* (10:55)

PSRC will provide an overview of the current policies for [FTA funds in the Project Tracking Policies for PSRC's Federal Funds](#), including the application of the rules for regional funds to the new Equity Formula distribution. PSRC will then review options for additional flexibility under some circumstances to those policies. The TOC will review and make a recommendation to the Transportation Policy Board on the suggested changes, as further detailed in the attachment.

7. Discussion: Recommendations and Next Steps for Connecting People to Transit Work Program* (11:15)

PSRC will share the final product of the Transit Access Working Group. Staff will present a draft revision to tasks 2-5 of the regional Transit Access Work Program for committee feedback at the meeting.

8. Discussion: Transit Agency Roundtable (11:40)

As time permits, transit agency staff will provide updates on their work that they want to share with their regional partners.

9. Information: VISION 2050 Awards: Call for Nominations 2024*

10. Next Meeting: March 27, 2024

Calendar Link: <https://www.psrc.org/calendar>

11. Adjourn (12:00)

*Supporting materials attached

Zoom Participation Options:

To join audio/video conference:

<https://psrc-org.zoom.us/j/81700863118?pwd=Mmw0Q1JrU21XNkRSWGZXNmRNWlArQT09>

To join via cellphone (1-touch dial):

8778535257,,81700863118#,,,,*553746# US Toll-free

8884754499,,81700863118#,,,,*553746# US Toll-free

To join via phone:

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

Meeting ID: 817 0086 3118

Passcode: 553746

Other Formats:

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Transportation Operators Committee Meeting Summary

Date: January 24, 2024

Location: Online Meeting Only: Zoom Remote Meeting

Welcome and Introductions

Peter Heffernan, Chair, welcomed everyone at 10:00 a.m. Peter took roll call and confirmed the members and alternates present.

Approval of Meeting Summary

The summary for the November 29, 2023, meeting was approved.

Transportation Policy Board Debrief

Gil Cerise, PSRC, provided a brief overview of the November Transportation Policy Board (TPB) meeting and shared the location of the Transportation work program tracker that TOC members requested be highlighted. As part of the TPB debrief, Gil shared information on mapping that PSRC staff has been doing for Transit-oriented development (TOD) legislation that is proposed in the current legislative session.

Action: FTA Fund Redistribution Requests

Sarah Gutschow, PSRC, provided an overview of requested redistributions of funds between projects, as detailed in the [agenda packet](#). The redistribution requests for projects from the Seattle-Tacoma Everett (STE) Urbanized Area (UZA) were previously recommended by the Regional FTA Caucus.

- King County Metro requested five redistributions of funds between projects in the STE UZA.
- Sound Transit requested one redistribution of funds between projects in the STE UZA.
- Community Transit requested one redistribution of funds between projects in the Marysville UZA.

The committee then voted unanimously to approve the redistribution requests for recommendation by the Transportation Policy Board at their next meeting.

For more information, contact Sarah Gutschow at sgutschow@psrc.org

Discussion: 2024 Project Selection

Sarah provided a brief overview of the upcoming 2024 Project Selection process for 2027-2028 FTA Earned Share and Equity Formula funds, including some approaching key milestones.

For more information, contact Sarah Gutschow at sgutschow@psrc.org

Discussion: Next Steps Connecting People to Transit

Jean Kim, PSRC, shared that the ad hoc Transit Access Working Group just completed its fourth meeting on Monday, January 22. The Working Group agreed to a set of four recommendations for additional work on the regional transit access topic. PSRC staff will do follow-up with working group members who were unable to attend the meeting and will finalize recommendations based on that follow-up. The TOC will review a final report with recommendations at the March 27 meeting, where PSRC staff will engage the committee on how to amend the existing PSRC Transit Access work program to account for the working group recommendations.

For more information, contact Jean Kim at jkim@psrc.org

Discussion: 2024 TOC Agenda Topics

Gil Cerise, PSRC, shared a draft 2024 TOC agenda topics calendar with the members and took input on topics in the context of PSRC's 2024 work plan focusing on project selection and initial stages of the RTP 2026-2050.

For more information, contact Gil Cerise at gcerise@psrc.org

Discussion: Transit Agency Roundtable

During the Roundtable, the committee received updates and announcements from the following attendees:

- Sophie Luthin, Community Transit
- Andrew Arnes, Pierce Transit
- Alex Krieg, Sound Transit
- Jillian Nordstrom, WSDOT
- Cordy Crockett, WSDOT
- Peter Heffernan, King County Metro

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 p.m.

***Members and Alternates Present**

See attached attendance roster.

***PSRC Staff, Alternates and Guests Present**

Jillian Nordstrom, WSDOT

PSRC

Gil Cerise, Erin Hogan, Sarah Gutschow, Nick Johnson, Alexa Leach, Jean Kim, Carol Naito

**Attendees were present via remote participation*

TOC Attendance Roster

(Members and Alternates represented)

Date: January 24, 2024 10:00am - 12:00pm

Online/Remote Meeting Only

Agency/Jurisdiction		Name
Transit Agencies		
Community Transit (1)	x	Sophie Luthin
		<i>Kathryn Rasmussen (Alt.)</i>
Everett Transit (1)	x	Melinda Adams
		<i>Michael Schmieder (Alt.)</i>
King County Metro (1)	x	Peter Heffernan, Chair
		<i>Erik Rundell (Alt.)</i>
Kitsap Transit (1)	x	Steffani Lillie
		<i>Edward Coviello (Alt.)</i>
Pierce County Ferries (1)		VACANT
		<i>Nick Lacsina (Alt.)</i>
Pierce Transit (1)	x	Andrew Arnes
		<i>Tina Lee (Alt.)</i>
City of Seattle (1)		Jen Malley-Crawford
	x	<i>Benjamin Smith (Alt.)</i>
Sound Transit (1)	x	Alex Krieg
		<i>Lisa Wolterink (Alt.)</i>
State		
WSDOT - Washington State Ferries (1)		Jason Rogers
		<i>John Bernhard (Alt.)</i>
WSDOT (1)	x	Cordy Crockett
		<i>Jill Nordstrom (Alt.)</i>
Non-Voting Participants		
Regional FTA Caucus (1)	x	Steffani Lillie , Chair (Kitsap Transit)
		<i>Clint Ritter, Vice Chair (Pierce County Ferries) (Alt.)</i>
Intercity Transit (1)		Peter Stackpole
		<i>Jessica Gould (Alt.)</i>
Special Needs Transportation Committee (SNTC) (1)		Susan Carter, Chair (Hopelink)
		VACANT

FTA EQUITY FORMULA DISTRIBUTION GUIDANCE

Updated February 2024

PSRC first distributed Equity Formula funding in 2023 for the project selection process for FFY2025-2026 FTA funds. The following draft guidance updates the previous version, based on feedback received from the boards during discussions of the 2025-2026 FTA project recommendations.

PSRC has developed the following procedures and guidance to demonstrate that FTA funds distributed via the Equity Formula are used to improve transit services and access for PSRC's identified equity focus area populations, hereafter referred to as "EFAs." PSRC's defined EFAs are: people of color, people with low incomes, older adults, youth, people with disabilities, and people with limited English proficiency. Further background information on the Equity Formula distribution can be found in the [2024 Policy Framework for PSRC's Federal Funds](#).

General Procedures for Project Identification

For the Equity Formula, eligible agencies must identify specific projects and amounts to utilize their funding distributions. At the point of project submittal, each agency must provide a description of how the project improves equity with supporting information, per the established Equity criterion shown below. Projects must also meet all applicable federal, state and regional requirements.

PSRC staff will review and assess each project submittal to ensure that it meets the purpose and intent of the Equity Formula distribution. PSRC will then follow up with sponsors for any submittals that do not meet the high bar set for this distribution, or if additional information is needed to evaluate how the project improves equity for the identified EFAs. Project submissions will then be reviewed and recommended by the Transportation Operators Committee to the Transportation Policy Board. The Transportation Policy Board recommends final approval by the Executive Board.

The Equity Formula funds can be used for various types of investments that expand and improve transit services for EFAs. Agencies should not apply the Equity Formula distribution in the same manner as the Earned Share distribution, but instead focus these funds on investments that will specifically improve equitable outcomes for identified EFAs.

For each project, sponsors must respond to the established Equity criteria shown below to demonstrate the relationship to EFAs within the project area and how the project improves mobility and access to opportunities for these populations. Further guidance for responding to each of the bullets is provided in the [Equity Guidance](#) and other resources from the 2024 Call for Projects.

- Identify the EFAs served by the project, including supportive data. Sponsors will also identify the most impacted or marginalized populations within the project area.
- Identify the disparities and/or gaps being experienced by the identified EFAs.
- Describe how the project will expand access to high, middle and/or living wage jobs for the identified EFAs.
- Describe how the project is addressing the identified disparities or gaps and will provide benefits or positive impacts to these EFAs by improving their mobility.

- Describe the public outreach process that led to the project, including specific outreach to the identified EFA communities. Include specific outreach or communication with the EFAs identified in the previous section, including activities reflective of best practices from PSRC's [Equitable Engagement Guidance](#).
- Identify the typology associated with the location of the project in PSRC's Housing Opportunities by Place tool, and then identify the strategies the transit agency and/or jurisdiction in which the project is located uses to reduce the risk of displacement that are aligned with those listed for the typology.
- Describe how the project will improve safety and/or address safety issues currently being experienced by the identified EFA communities.
- Identify whether the project will be located within an area identified as a 7 or higher for diesel pollution and disproportionate impacts in the Washington Environmental Health Disparities map.

Further Guidance on Project Identification

Per board direction, the Equity Formula funds should not be applied in the same manner as the Earned Share distribution, but instead used for investments to expand and/or improve transit services and access for identified EFAs. Accordingly, as a general rule these funds should not be used for more programmatic projects in support of existing transit services or routine operations.

If agencies do not have capital expansion projects available to utilize the funds, some additional flexibility may be warranted for applying the funds to more programmatic projects. Requests for additional flexibility will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis but must be consistent with the overarching goals of the Equity Formula distribution.

If requesting to use the funds to support existing services, in addition to responding to the established Equity criteria project sponsors should also provide the following additional information:

- Describe how this project goes above and beyond simply maintaining existing transit services / access to specifically improve equity for the identified EFAs. The benefits of the project for identified EFAs should be described in detail – for example, are there improvements to the existing service, improvements in reliability or access, etc.?
- Describe why the use of the Equity Formula funds to support existing services (as with Earned Share funding) is necessary. Will there be a loss of opportunity? Will there be a negative impact on service for the identified EFAs? For example, are there no other funding sources available and the use of Equity Formula funds will prevent a loss of service? If so, provide detailed supportive information.

Examples are provided below for how specific programmatic types of projects or projects that are more unique in nature or location might be eligible for and meet the intent of the Equity Formula funding, and how they might best respond to the established Equity criteria.

- **Vehicle purchase projects** not tied to a specific route, new or existing, should at a minimum provide information on the relevant routes and areas on which the vehicles will be used, and then identify the EFAs served within these areas. If the project is for expansion vehicles, the increase in service should be described. However, if the project

is for replacement vehicles, information should be provided on how the project will improve conditions for the identified EFAs. For example, does the purchase of replacement vehicles improve the resilience and reliability of the service, and if so, describe the before and after conditions. Will the service be negatively impacted without the use of the Equity funds? If so, provide details on the loss of opportunity or the lack of other funding for this purpose. To the extent possible, vehicle purchase projects submitted for Equity Formula funds should be tied to a specific route or area, so that the service can be more directly related to specific EFA populations.

- **Ferry projects (terminal or vessel improvements)** are unique in their location compared to the region's EFA populations. While the proportion of these populations may be lower than the regional averages, data may still be provided using Census tract data. To the extent feasible, agencies should identify data related to these population groups based on either the location of the terminal(s) and/or any ridership data that might be available. The agency will then respond to the remaining Equity criteria and describe the improved conditions and/or mobility for the identified EFAs.
- **Preservation and maintenance projects** for existing transit services should go above and beyond routine maintenance to specifically provide benefits and reduce disparities for identified EFA populations. For example, projects to improve ADA infrastructure at stations or on vehicles can be tied to equity benefits for people with disabilities. For more general preservation and maintenance activities, sponsors should respond to the questions identified above related to loss of opportunity, and/or fully describe the extenuating circumstances for using Equity Formula funds on these investments and the improvements and benefits being provided.

PSRC'S PROJECT TRACKING POLICIES

DRAFT CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY FOR PSRC'S FTA EQUITY FORMULA FUNDS

2C. Equity Formula Funding Policies

Because Equity Formula funds are sourced from the Regional portion of funds, and based on the original purpose and intent of this distribution process as determined by PSRC's boards, there are more rigorous policies and procedures for these funds that are distinct from those for Earned Share funds.

At times there may be issues facing a project that require an exception to the policies, as further detailed in the following sections. Requests for any exception will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, but any exception granted must result in circumstances consistent with the overarching goals of the project tracking program – i.e., project delays and increased costs are reduced, projects are delivered in a timely manner, and the exception is processed in a fair and equitable manner. Depending on the request, exceptions will be processed administratively or require approval by PSRC's Boards.

PSRC is proposing a limited amount of additional flexibility within these policies where warranted, as described throughout this document in *red italics*.

Equity Formula Programming Requirements

Per PSRC's policies for Regional funds, as well as the overall purpose and intent of the Equity Formula program - and distinct from the Earned Share policies - Equity Formula funds may not be awarded to phases that have already been awarded PSRC's federal funds. Additional funds to a previously awarded phase would only be considered if the funds will implement new or additional scope beyond the original award. This policy is also consistent with the federal and state rules and expectations that when phases are programmed, the grant funding and any other identified sources are adequate to fully fund the phase.

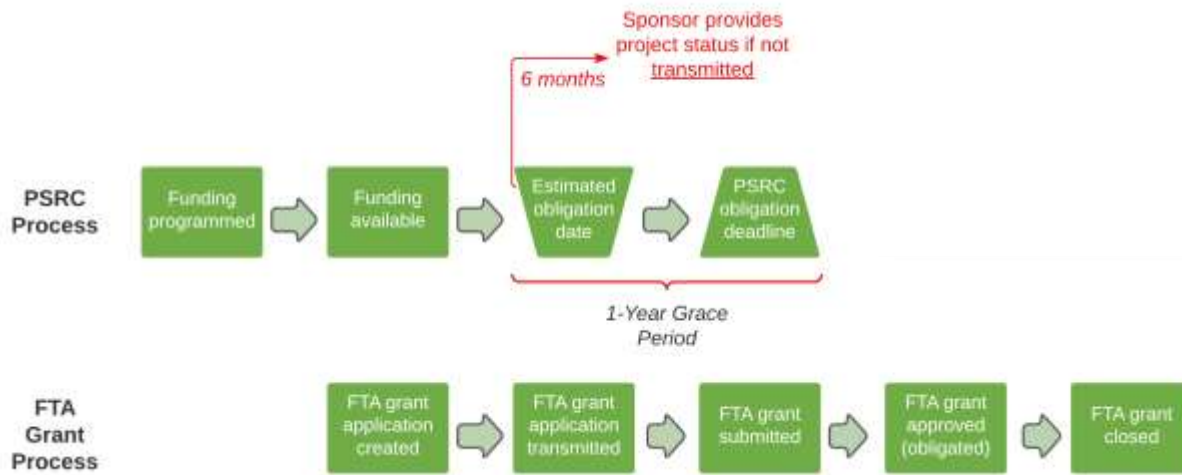
Exceptions to this may be considered to add Equity Formula funds to previously funded project phases if it will allow the project to be delivered faster or more efficiently. For example, by accelerating the project schedule, reducing project costs, etc. These requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and sponsors must provide detailed information on how these parameters will be met.

Equity Formula Obligation Deadlines

For Regional FTA funds, which include Equity Formula funds and any previously awarded competitive and preservation set-aside funding, sponsors are awarded funds based on a specific federal fiscal year as identified and awarded in the project selection process. Previously, sponsors were allowed to identify an obligation deadline at any time within the fiscal year but no later than September 30th. For more streamlined project tracking and monitoring and to allow maximum time for sponsors to obligate the funds, the obligation deadline for all projects with Regional funds will be set to September 30th of the awarded fiscal year.

Regional funds are allowed a one-year grace period beyond their estimated obligation date before funds would be required to be returned. Funds will be considered to have met their PSRC obligation deadlines once the sponsor has transmitted a corresponding grant application in FTA's Transit Award Management System (TrAMS). Regional FTA funds are considered delayed if they have not been transmitted by six months after their estimated obligation date, as illustrated in the graphic below.¹

Equity Formula Project Tracking



PSRC staff will monitor progress of all projects and reach out to sponsors of delayed projects six months after the original estimated obligation date. Within one month of the notification from PSRC, the project sponsor is expected to provide further information on the status of the project, the reasons for the delay, their work with the FTA on advancing the application and any project work already ongoing under pre-award authority. If the sponsor does not respond with this information by the deadline, the funds would then be at risk of being returned to the region.

PSRC staff will review information received on delayed projects and then consult with the TOC and FTA to determine if an extension is warranted based on whether the delay was considered “reasonable” or “unreasonable.” The primary consideration in determining whether or not a delay would be considered reasonable is whether the delay is due to factors outside of the sponsor’s control. Regardless of the reason for delay, the sponsor is expected to demonstrate that they have been putting in effort to progress their application through the grant process in TrAMS.

Reasonable delays would include processing delays by FTA or other resource agencies, e.g. NEPA approval; new FTA requirements, expectations or interpretations; and project delays due to working with partner agencies *or the community*.

Unreasonable delays may include significant changes to scope, shifting priorities within the agency, insufficient funding, and work that was not begun in a reasonable time to meet the obligation deadline.

¹ After a project sponsor develops a grant application in TrAMS, the application is then “transmitted” for initial review by FTA. Once FTA completes the initial review, the sponsor can progress to formally “submit” the application for final review before being approved for funding obligation.

For delays due to emergent situations, the TOC will make evaluations on a case-by-case basis to determine if the delay is due to a true emergency. The definition of “emergency” will be applied as follows:

- The need is due to a situation that was unpredictable and for which the sponsoring agency could not have planned; AND
- The facility / project has been impacted by a natural disaster or catastrophic event; or
- The facility / project is experiencing a major safety issue; or
- There are or will be significant impacts to the regional system and/or local population / employment centers if the need is not addressed.

For reasonable delays, the TOC will determine next steps on a case-by-case basis. Next steps could include setting the next check-in date for the project and/or revising the obligation schedule for the funds and recommending a one-time obligation date extension.

For unreasonable delays, an extension will not be granted and the funds must be obligated by the end of the one-year grace period or be returned.

For both reasonable and unreasonable delays, if the sponsor does not submit the grant application by the original or extended deadline, then they would be required to return the funds to the region. Returned funds from projects that did not meet their deadlines will be redistributed to other projects.

Equity Formula Scope Changes

Projects are reviewed for consistency with the purpose and intent of the Equity Formula program and the established equity criteria, and are released for public review and comment. As such, the expectation is that phases and scopes will be delivered as originally programmed.

Once Equity Formula funds are awarded:

- Funds cannot be moved between projects;
- Funds cannot be moved between phases within a project;
- The scope of projects as originally awarded Equity Formula funds may not be substantively changed.

Requests for scope changes will be reviewed and approved in advance by PSRC staff to ensure that the modified description is consistent with the project’s original scope, purpose, intent, and/or utility.

Exceptions to these rules may be considered on a case by case basis, and in general must demonstrate a compelling need for the deviation. Examples may include:

- *Circumstances by which projects may be delivered faster if the request is granted, but the affected phases will remain fully funded.*
- *Community outreach of an Equity Formula project results in revisions needed, such as changes to scope specifically requested by affected equity focus populations within the project area.*

Any proposed substantive changes to existing Equity Formula projects would need to be reviewed by PSRC staff, the TOC, and ultimately the Boards per existing rules.

Equity Formula Annual Adjustments

For the FTA annual adjustments process, any increase in the Regional portion of funds will be distributed proportionately to eligible agencies using the Equity Formula. Agencies will then use the funds for new Equity Formula projects or for additional work on existing Equity Formula projects. For both new and expanded projects, agencies are required to provide information in response to the established equity criteria, and the projects will be reviewed by the TOC to ensure they are consistent with the Equity Formula distribution policies.

In some instances, transit agencies may receive modest amounts of additional funds that they are unable to utilize to fully fund a new project phase. In these cases, the TOC could consider an exception to allow the agencies to instead increase the federal share of an existing Equity Formula project.

If PSRC receives a reduction in regional funds, the reduction will be applied to each agency proportional to their share of the Equity Formula funds, and existing Equity Formula projects identified for the reduction.

Returning Regional FTA Funds

PSRC's FTA funds may be returned through the previously identified project tracking policies, through cost savings at time of grant completion, on a voluntary basis by sponsors due to project cancellations, the obtaining of other grant funding such that PSRC funds are no longer required, or other circumstances. The following guidelines are identified for sponsors wishing to return FTA funds:

- a. Sponsors voluntarily returning funds should provide PSRC with a letter or a memorandum signed by a responsible official (mayor, council member, commissioner, department director, etc.) requesting the return. The letter should identify the project from which the funds are being returned, the funding source and amount being returned, and a summary of the reason for the return.
- b. For projects that do not meet their obligation deadlines per PSRC's project tracking policies, sponsors will be notified that the unobligated funds are no longer available and will be returned for redistribution. All projects that return funds may be awarded funding during the next or subsequent project selection processes, for any phase or portion of the phase that is no longer funded.
- c. Sponsors of projects returning funds should then work with FTA Region 10 and PSRC on the proper processing of returned funds.

Sponsors returning Equity Formula funds would first have the opportunity to reprogram the funds to a new Equity Formula project(s) or for additional work on an existing Equity Formula project. If sponsors are not able to utilize the funds, they would then be proportionately redistributed to other eligible sponsors through either a stand-alone process or as part of the

next project selection process. This redistribution would follow the same procedures as previously described for additional FTA regional funds from the annual adjustments process.

DRAFT

PSRC Transit Access Recommendation Report (DRAFT)

February 2024

Introduction

Transit is an essential component of the regional transportation system, connecting people to jobs, schools, friends and family, and essential destinations. Transit access refers to the ability of people to easily get to and use transit. The [VISION 2050](#) Regional Growth Strategy calls for PSRC to provide and encourage alternatives to driving alone and ensure access to and availability of reliable transit options. The region is served by nine transit agencies that provided over 221 million boardings in 2018. More than 80% of the trips to access transit were made by active transportation modes (walking and bicycling). The remainder of the trips were either made by private vehicles or a variety of pick-up/drop-off modes, including ADA Paratransit, community shuttles, and Mobility On Demand (MOD) services, among others.

In 2016–2017, PSRC completed a multi-year assessment of transit access and published tools to assist local jurisdictions and transit agency stakeholders in improving transit access in the region, including the Transit Access Checklist, Toolkit, and Funding Matrix published in 2017, on the PSRC website at: <https://www.psrc.org/our-work/transit-access>. These tools were intended to be used with one another to help increase transit access at any location and used by jurisdictions, transit agencies, and other agencies to coordinate and collaborate on the assessment of transit access needs and opportunities across the region.

Existing PSRC Transit Access Tools

Transit Access Checklist is intended for use by stakeholders to provide a framework for conducting a comprehensive assessment of existing transit access conditions at any given location, framing questions under key characteristics such as urban form, transit service, and parking. It also includes suggested data sources that local agencies can use to complete the checklist.

Transit Access Toolkit identifies 60 distinct transit access improvements and organized them across eight strategic areas. The Toolkit was designed to help stakeholders understand how each strategic area increases access to transit and the roles played by various stakeholders in implementing access improvements. The Toolkit also documents benefits, costs, common issues and challenges, and regional examples of all access improvements identified.

The **Transit Access Funding Matrix** is intended to assist stakeholders in identifying potential funding opportunities for transit access strategies identified in the Toolkit.

To better connect people to transit, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) specifically calls for developing and updating tools and resources to help identify where access to transit can be improved in the region. With the anticipated expansion of the regional transit network, it is projected that active transportation access to transit will rise from the current 83% to reach 90% of all trips accessing transit by 2050. In addition, jurisdictions, transit, and other responsible agencies will need to collaborate in their planning to facilitate various transit access modes around future station areas.

During the early project scoping phase, relevant committees identified potential ways for PSRC to support local jurisdictions and transit agencies as they work to improve transit access, including:

- **Clarifying stakeholder roles and responsibilities** throughout the process.
- **Providing data, tools, and resources** to support transit access work by local agencies.
- Seeking ways to improve **access to and from historically marginalized and underserved communities.**
- **Developing regional metrics** for tracking transit access improvements.

As part of the RTP implementation and in response to committee input, PSRC developed a transit access work program that began with a review of existing tools and resources in conjunction with updated data to help identify potential improvements to regional transit access assessments.

Ad Hoc Transit Access Working Group

To assist staff with technical expertise and lived experience, PSRC recruited an ad hoc working group to support the review and evaluation of existing tools, resources, and data through the development of case studies. PSRC's committee leadership assisted staff in identifying potential working group members with specific expertise and perspectives across the region. As a result, PSRC recruited stakeholders from diverse fields as described below:

- **Local jurisdiction staff** with expertise in land use planning, development, and infrastructure in the public rights-of-way, including sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and other facilities supporting access to transit, MOD, specialized transportation, and other modes.
- **Transit agency staff** with expertise in transit station and/or stop access and management of parking at park-and-rides.
- **Developers/architects** with expertise in Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and place-making.
- **System users** who can provide lived experiences to inform the transit access work, including mobility device users.
- **Additional perspectives** include public health and state perspective (WSDOT) on improving access to transit in the region.

The working group was charged with reviewing existing tools, developing a recommendation report, and providing input and guidance on future transit access tasks. The working group convened four times between May 2023 and January 2024, with input via email between meetings.

This report documents the findings from the meetings and case study work and outlines recommendations for the next steps of the transit access work program.

Transit Access Case Studies

As noted in the previous section, the purpose of the case studies was to assess PSRC's existing transit access tools, pinpoint areas for potential improvements, and develop the next steps of the work program. This section highlights findings from the literature review and a summary of the case studies.

Literature review summary

Before delving into the case studies, PSRC conducted a review of recent studies and resources to build on the existing transit access literature review and to identify key characteristics that influence transit access. The review reaffirmed the use of previously identified key characteristics: urban form, transit service, and parking. It also identified additional details to these characteristics, such as the availability of MOD services and considerations of equity and safety as crucial elements for assessing transit access. The full literature review document can be found at: <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/2023transitaccess-literaturereviewfindings.pdf>.

Case Study Site Selection

PSRC sought potential case study locations by reaching out to various committees comprising stakeholders with vested interests in transit access. Then PSRC consulted with working group members to finalize the sites. Staff provided a preliminary review of potential sites, and the working group helped select five locations across the region that represent different contexts and transit access challenges. Based upon further working group feedback, the [Opportunity Score](#) and the availability of MOD programs were also considered. The following are the sites selected for the case study:

- Wheaton Way Transit Center in Bremerton.
- Pacific Avenue and S 72nd Street in Tacoma.
- Tukwila International Boulevard Station in Tukwila.
- Judkins Park Station in Seattle (future light rail station under construction).
- Mariner Station in Unincorporated Snohomish County (future light rail station under consideration).

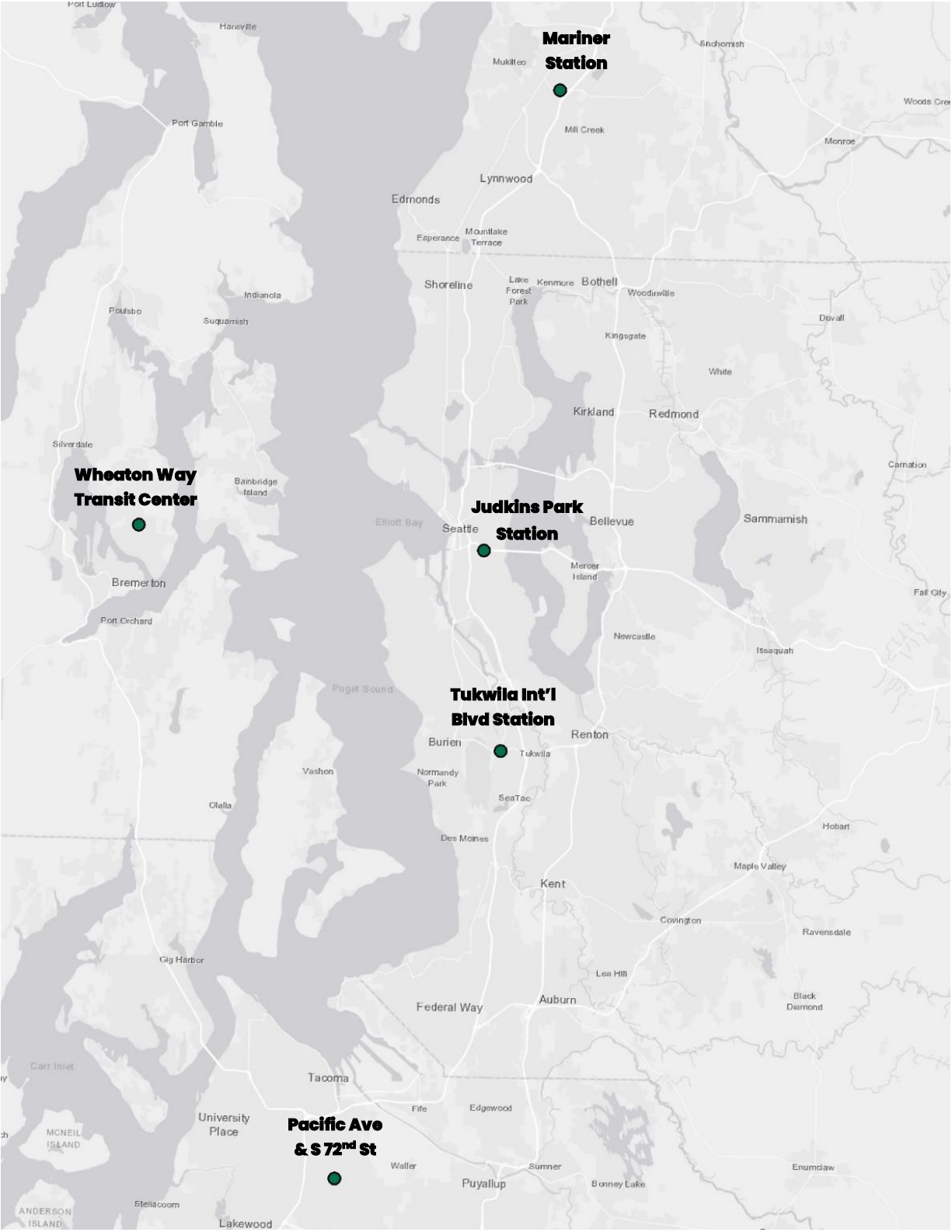


Figure 1 Transit Access Case Study Sites

Methodology

For the case study, PSRC staff initially filled out the Transit Access Checklist using readily available resources. Staff made note of the questions that required further information or data. Then, PSRC submitted data requests to pertinent agencies, including jurisdictions and transit agencies. PSRC used the data and feedback provided by these agencies to complete a checklist review of each site and then used the resources to connect access challenges with strategies described in the Transit Access Toolkit.

Summary of findings

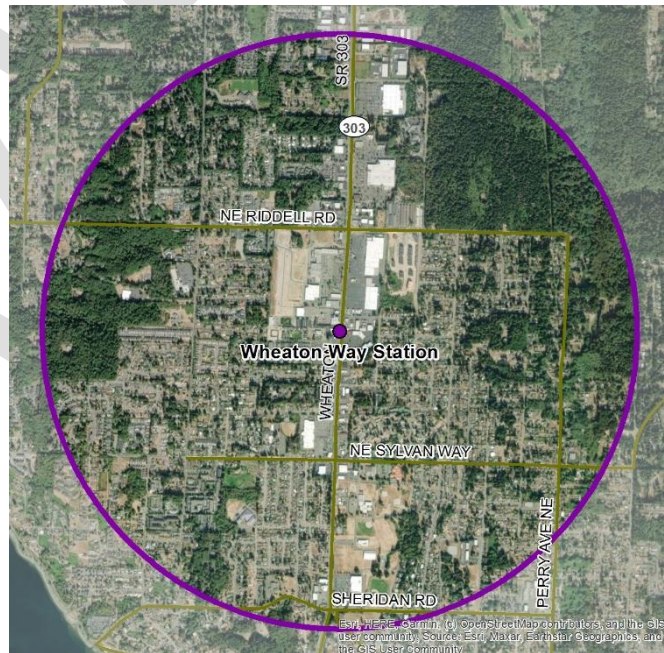
Case Studies

Selected sites include both existing and future potential station areas across the region, served by a variety of transit options, including local bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail, transit agencies' MOD programs, complementary ADA paratransit, and other transportation options. Below are the key findings from each case study site:

Wheaton Way Transit Center, Bremerton

Context Derived from Checklist:

- **Urban Form:** The area is characterized by superblocks. Immediate land uses are predominantly commercial, while some higher-density residential complexes surround the station outside of the commercial area. Frequent congestion affecting bus travel time is observed at this location due to the transit center being located mid-block, with access limited to Wheaton Way/SR 303. The area has incomplete pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the station.
- **Transit Service:** The site is served by seven bus routes including three commuter and one express service connecting riders to other transit stations and a ferry terminal in Bremerton. This site provides covered waiting areas.
- **Parking:** 162 dedicated park-and-ride spaces are available at a 40% utilization rate.



Transit Access Improvement Strategies: based on the Checklist review, relevant transit access solutions can be found under the “Enhance street network connectivity” strategy in the Toolkit.

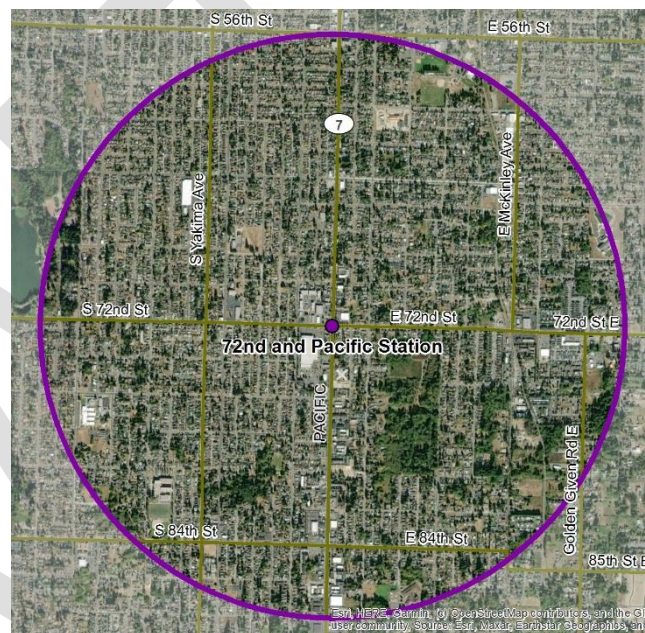
Key Stakeholders:

- Kitsap Transit
- City of Bremerton
- WSDOT

Pacific Avenue and S 72nd Street, Tacoma

Context Derived from Checklist:

- **Urban Form:** Located at the intersection of superblocks, the site experiences frequent heavy congestion. Although the station area has sidewalks, there are some gaps, and it lacks bicycle facilities. The Pacific Avenue and nearby superblock commercials create an access barrier for transit users. Moreover, Pacific Ave itself is a significant barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists attempting to access bus stops due to wide roads and lack of safe active transportation facilities. Based on the review of WSDOT Crash Data, the station area experienced several fatal and serious collisions involving pedestrians and bicyclists in the past five years.
- **Transit Service:** Currently two bus routes serve this location, offering riders access to transit centers and major destinations in Tacoma and Lakewood. However, the current environment seems to present challenges for transit users, particularly regarding rider information. It appears that customer information and wayfinding at the bus stops in this station area could be improved.
- **Parking:** While ample surface parking is available near commercial properties, there are no dedicated parking or park-and-ride facilities near the station. Agencies have indicated that paratransit, shuttles, or taxis use adjacent parking lots for pick-up and drop-off.



Transit Access Improvement Strategies: based on the Checklist review, relevant transit access solutions can be found under the “Improve active transportation environment” and “Elevate the transit user experience” strategies in the Toolkit.

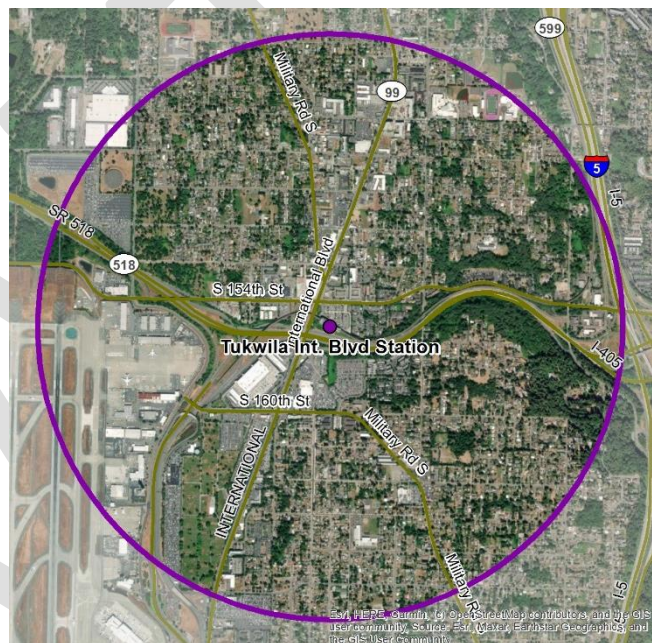
Key Stakeholders:

- Pierce Transit
- City of Tacoma
- WSDOT

Tukwila International Boulevard Station, Tukwila

Context Derived from Checklist:

- **Urban Form:** The station area experiences a high volume of vehicles with consistent congestion during the PM peak, typically on weekdays. Some major thoroughfares have sidewalks, although they may be incomplete and narrow. No protected bicycle connections are available around the station.
- **Transit Service:** Four bus routes and light rail offer transportation to various regional destinations including Downtown Seattle and major cities in South King. Metro provides Metro Flex, a Mobility On Demand service in this area, averaging 28 rides per day. Metro and Sound Transit identified the station area as the primary transfer point. Improving customer information is necessary as there is currently no real-time arrival information for the light rail.
- **Parking:** There are approximately 600 parking stalls available, with a utilization rate consistently at or above 95%. Transit agency staff noted that the parking lots usually reach full capacity by 8:30 am. However, a relatively high percentage of riders appear to be accessing this station using a variety of modes other than personal vehicles as well.



Transit Access Improvement Strategies: based on the Checklist review, relevant transit access solutions can be found under the “Improve active transportation environment” and “Elevate the transit user experience” strategies in the Toolkit.

Key Stakeholders:

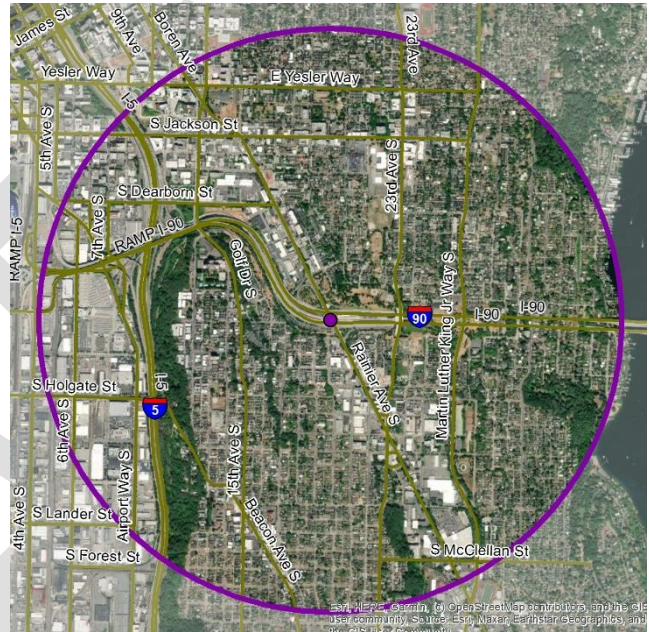
- Sound Transit
- King County Metro
- City of Tukwila
- City of SeaTac
- WSDOT

Judkins Park Station (Future Station), Seattle

This station is under construction, with a planned opening date in 2025 as part of Sound Transit's East Link Extension. Located in the heart of I-90, it benefits from nearby bus stops, encouraging convenient transfers between local buses and the light rail.

Context Derived from Checklist:

- **Urban Form:** The area encompasses a variety of land uses. By 2050, the area is projected to experience substantial population growth, estimated at 58% increase, alongside a significant increase in employment opportunities, expected to rise by 80%. There is a gap in the sidewalks north of the station on Rainier Ave S.
- **Transit Service:** Current bus routes connect riders to many key destinations in the greater Seattle area. King County Metro suspects that there are medium to high levels of pick-up/drop-off usage in the station area, and they identified the station as a primary transit route transfer point.
- **Parking:** There is no dedicated parking lot for the current station. Sound Transit is working closely with nearby communities to minimize potential parking impacts to surrounding neighbors and businesses, as the new station is expected to bring increased demand for parking in the area.



Transit Access Improvement Strategies: based on the Checklist review, relevant transit access solutions can be found under the "Improve active transportation environment" and "Elevate the transit user experience" strategies in the Toolkit.

Key Stakeholders:

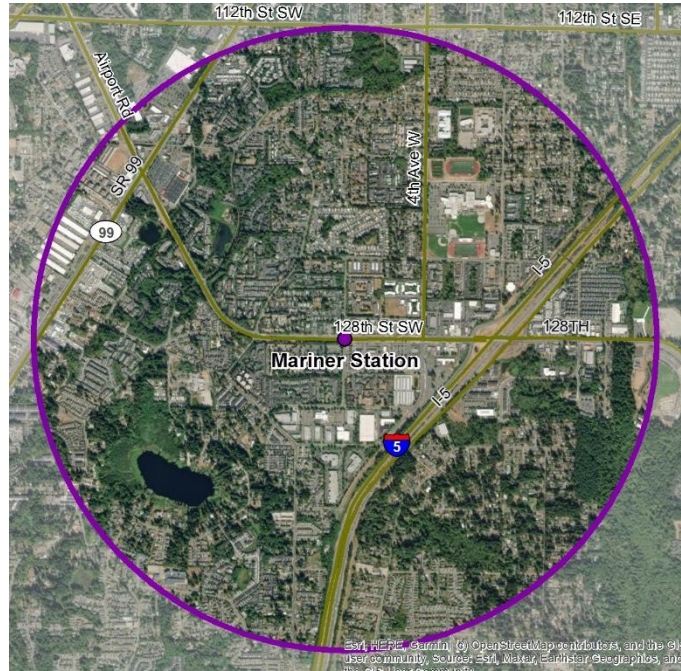
- Sound Transit
- King County Metro
- City of Seattle
- WSDOT

Mariner Station (Potential Future Station), Everett

Mariner Station is one of the potential light rail station locations Sound Transit is considering for their Everett Link extension project (expected to open for service 2037–2041).

Context Derived from Checklist:

- **Urban Form:** The site is situated within a commercial area, with residential properties nearby. Currently, the bicycle lanes along 128th and Airport Road lack protection or buffering. According to the WSDOT’s Crash Data Portal, there have been several collisions involving bicyclists and pedestrians within the immediate station area over the past five years. Per local staff, there is a fair amount of people crossing the arterial mid-block or away from marked or signalized crossings along 128th.
- **Transit Service:** Currently, at Mariner Park and Ride (which serves as a proxy for this future site), there are fewer than 1,000 average weekday boardings with minimal transfer or drop-off activity observed. There is a Swift Bus Rapid Transit Station (connecting Blue & Green lines) within a mile distance from this site. It is anticipated that ridership demand will increase with the start of Link light rail.
- **Parking:** Private commercial parking lots are available near the station area. Mariner Park and Ride (serving as a proxy to the site), offers 653 parking stalls with a relatively low utilization rate.



Transit Access Improvement Strategies: based on the Checklist review, relevant transit access solutions can be found under the “Improve active transportation environment” and “Improve access via local transit and drop-off modes” strategies in the Toolkit.

Key Stakeholders:

- Sound Transit
- Community Transit
- Snohomish County

Staff collected feedback from local agencies on using the Checklist to assess transit access needs and context of each site and providing data for PSRC to complete the assessment. Here are some highlights heard from local staff:

- It is **difficult to answer** some checklist questions due to a lack of reliable and/or relevant data. Some agencies expressed difficulty determining the availability of data resources, accessing recent and accurate datasets, and which agency is responsible for providing data for which checklist questions.
- While the existing checklist seems to ask relevant questions, some local staff suggested including **additional questions**, to consider equity considerations or MOD-related components and/or new technologies when evaluating transit access needs.
- There are many questions in the checklist and many answers in the checklist that **require additional notes and explanations**.

The ability to facilitate collaboration between agencies is the key benefit of using existing transit access tools. PSRC identified the following as areas for potential improvement in these tools:

- Existing tools are lengthy and static, requiring significant staff time and effort to use and they are not fully interconnected. For example, data is often difficult to access or cumbersome to request from jurisdictions and transit agencies. Also, it is difficult to identify the key characteristics of each site as the **Transit Access Checklist** does not provide the context review results automatically.
- The **Transit Access Checklist** can lead generally to strategies in the **Transit Access Toolkit**, but which strategies are highlighted can be subjective and open to interpretation.
- The **Transit Access Toolkit** does not provide further guidance or assistance to develop shared transit access responsibilities among stakeholders.
- The **Transit Access Funding Matrix** is outdated, and the connection between the matrix and other elements of the PSRC transit access tools is unclear.
- None of the tools fully address key topics like equity, safety, and new technologies. Also, the tools do not provide a clear method to evaluate the transit access needs of future station locations. Tools are unable to distinguish the most impactful transit access improvements.

Recommendations

VISION 2050 Regional Growth Strategy includes a goal to attract 65% of residential growth and 75% of employment growth to regional growth centers and within walking distance of high-capacity transit station areas by 2050. The RTP adopted in May 2022 identifies improving access to transit as one of the key policy focus areas and further calls for the region to develop and update tools and resources to help identify where access to transit can be improved with an emphasis on active transportation access. Creating convenient and safe connections, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, will be critical for ensuring that transit is a viable choice for many communities as the region grows and the transit system expands. By 2050, more than half of households in the region will be located within a walkable distance of an integrated, high-capacity transit system, with transit ridership anticipated to triple the current levels.

Summary of recommendations

As noted in the case study findings, transit access tools can help local agencies better coordinate and share responsibilities to improve transit access needs in any given area. Based on the working group discussion and committee outreach, below is the summary of recommendations for next steps:

- **Develop clear and comprehensive information on the roles and responsibilities of agencies.** This could be achieved by facilitating a regional dialogue, enabling transit access stakeholders to address shared responsibilities and overlapping roles, and exploring opportunities for collaboration. Through such discussions, the region can develop guidance on how to determine roles and responsibilities early in the planning process. Agencies can collaborate to determine the most effective approach for implementing transit access solutions based on the unique characteristics (e.g. urban form, transit service, parking) of different transit locations. While agencies share transit access best practices, challenges, solutions, and resources, PSRC can facilitate the coordination and provide technical assistance, like data sharing or developing a model agreement for local agencies, to encourage regional collaboration.
- **Automate and streamline the tools to help local agencies more easily assess transit access needs and opportunities.** There is potential to enhance the interactivity and user-friendliness of transit access tools by creating a web-based tool. This work could benefit local agencies in accessing and utilizing PSRC's regional transit, active transportation, and demographic data for their local planning work. One promising suggestion for automation would be to develop a transit access context typology and an automated tool, similar to the PSRC's [Housing Opportunities by Place](#) tool. This automated tool would direct users to a subset of transit access improvement solutions tailored to their specific transit access context, making the process more efficient and impactful.

- **Integrate new emerging themes, including equity, safety, and new technologies to transit access tools.** These topics can be incorporated into transit access work in a variety of ways if adequate data is available. If the data is not readily available, ongoing efforts to develop and gather data pertinent to these topics would be needed. Furthermore, identifying key metrics related to these various topics will be a crucial step. PSRC will engage stakeholders to discuss and explore the best ways to integrate these new themes into the tools. Also, the tools can refer to the latest PSRC resources like the [Opportunity Mapping Index](#), [Displacement Risk Mapping](#), or [Transportation System Visualization Tool](#) in addition to other agencies' resources. These will help assess transit access needs more easily without contacting multiple agencies for data.
- **Develop guidance on equitable engagement and outreach for transit access.** This can build upon PSRC's existing [Equitable Engagement Guidance](#). A key outcome of this effort is to explore the question of "who" in relation to transit access, ensuring that riders representing people with accessibility needs, as well as communities of color, are actively involved and derive benefits from transit access improvements. The guidance on transit access engagement will support agencies in effectively engaging communities that have traditionally not been part of the planning and decision-making processes. Also, agencies can strengthen their current process of reaching diverse transit users and implement transit access solutions that meet their needs.

In addition to the above list, the working group expressed interest in exploring opportunities to prioritize funding for projects that do the most to improve transit access in areas identified with the most need. This could be achieved in various ways building upon the recommendations noted above.

Next steps

As a regional convener and data hub, PSRC is in a unique role to provide technical assistance in support of local agencies working to achieve regional transit access goals. The above recommendations will help PSRC to develop the next steps of the transit access work program and roll them into the regional transit access needs assessment to get ready for the next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) work for further implementation. Transit access planning work incorporated into the adopted RTP can influence future project selection processes and implementation to achieve the goals of VISION 2050.

Recommendations of this report will be shared with PSRC's committees and boards to provide an update to PSRC's Transit Access work program, including elements to be included in the RTP.

VISION 2050 AWARDS



Puget Sound Regional Council

Call for Nominations 2024

The Puget Sound Regional Council is seeking nominations for the VISION 2050 Awards Program through April 1, 2024.

The VISION 2050 Awards celebrate progress to enhance the region's communities and natural environment while advancing equity and opportunity for all. The awards recognize innovative work to create a better future for central Puget Sound.

We welcome nominations in the following categories:

On the Ground

Projects that show VISION 2050 in action today, including housing, mixed-use development or redevelopment, expanding access to opportunity, open space preservation, and transportation investments.

Planning Ahead

Comprehensive or subarea plans, economic development plans, climate action plans, equity initiatives, design guidelines, outreach programs, and other similar efforts that are shaping a positive future for the region.

Working Together

Cross-jurisdictional or public/private partnerships focused on solutions or working together to tackle tough problems and advance VISION 2050. Examples include multijurisdictional work on housing affordability, environmental and climate initiatives, corridor transportation planning, or other similar efforts to face long-term regional challenges.



The region's vision for 2050

is to provide exceptional quality of life, opportunity for all, connected communities, a spectacular natural environment, and an innovative, thriving economy. More information about the goals and themes of VISION 2050 can be found at www.psrc.org

Eligibility

New this year: PSRC will only be accepting nominations directly from its [membership](#). Firms seeking to nominate projects can do so through the member jurisdiction in which the project is located.

Nominations must be for projects, programs, plans or partnerships within the four-county region of King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties that help achieve VISION 2050. More information about the goals and themes of VISION 2050 can be found at psrc.org/vision.

All nominated projects must be completed and open, plans must be adopted by their jurisdictions, programs must be in operation and partnerships must be formally working together.

Submit a Nomination!

Nominations must be submitted online through the [VISION 2050 Awards Nomination Form](#)

Learn more at: www.psrc.org

Scan the code for
the nomination form



Schedule

- April 1, 2024 – Nominations due
- April–May 2024 – Awards Selection Committee composed of PSRC board members will select the award winners
- Summer/Fall 2024 – Awards presented on location around the region

