Preparation for 2024 PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Process

Equity Advisory Committee • March 7, 2024

Puget Sound Regional Council

We are leaders in the region to realize equity for all. Diversity, racial equity and inclusion are integrated into how we carry out all our work.

psrc.org/equity

Today

- **Overview**
  - Background
  - State Consolidated Grant
  - PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Process

- **Committee Review & Discussion**
  - Discussion on incorporating equity more fully into PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Process.

- **Next Steps**

Goals

- Understand the Consolidated Grant regional priority ranking process.

- Provide feedback to the following discussion questions:

  - Do you have any suggestions on **how to further incorporate equity** into PSRC's Regional Priority Ranking Process?

  - Do you have any **other ideas for improvement**?

Terminology

- **Specialized transportation services** are transportation programs designed for people who have difficulty transporting themselves due to age, income, or disability.

ADA Paratransit

Accessible Shuttles/Vans

Volunteer Transportation

- **"People with accessibility and mobility needs"** refers to older adults, youth, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, people with limited English proficiency, and others.
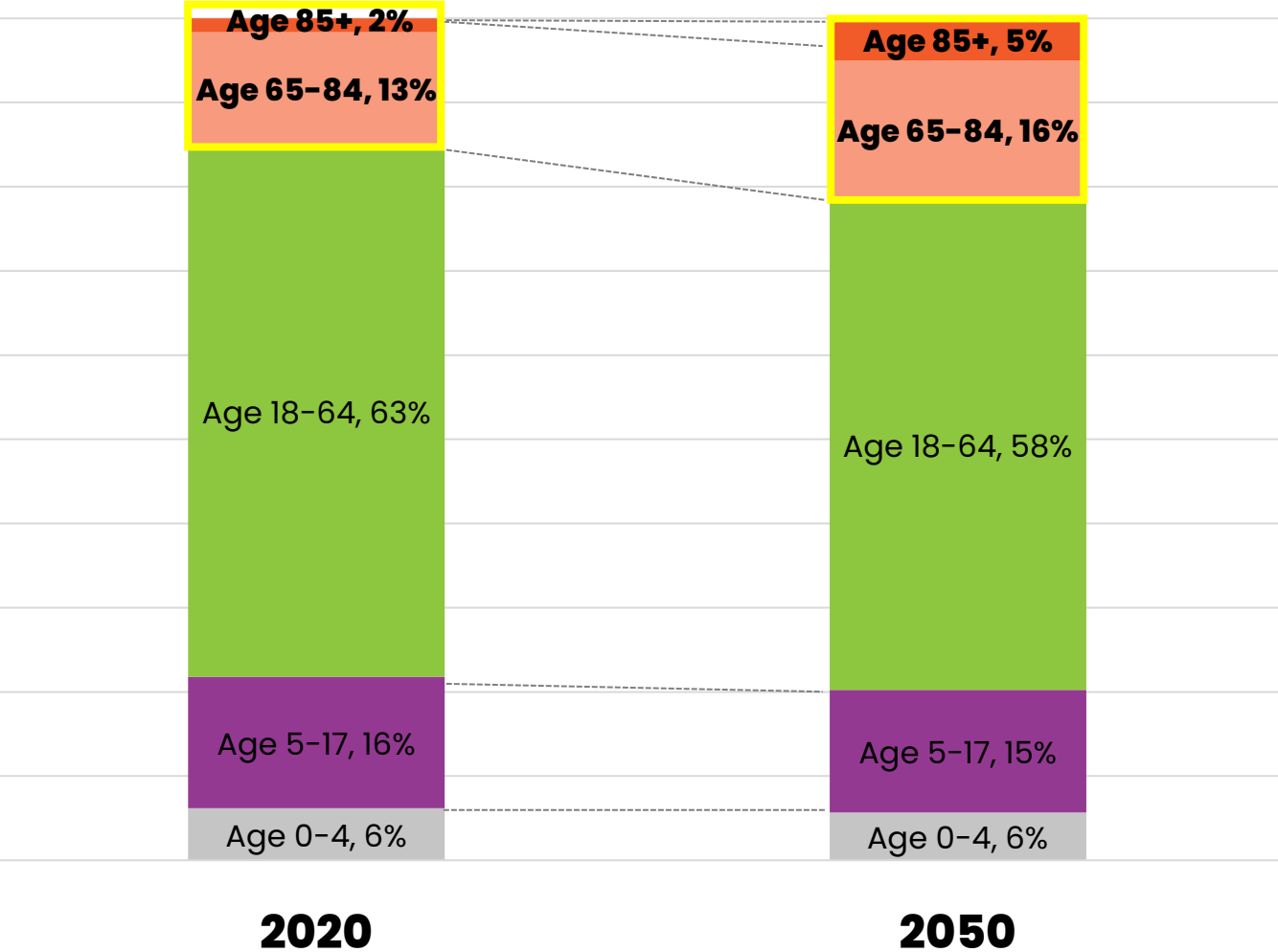
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PSRC's Roles

- Planning for **transit** and **specialized transportation** services.

- Development of the **Coordinated Mobility Plan** (meets the requirements of the Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan).

- For Transit: Distribute FTA funding.

- For Specialized Transportation: **Distribute regional priority rankings** for the State Consolidated Grant program.

PSRC Population Forecasts by Age Group

| Age 85+, 2% |
| Age 65-84, 13% |
| Age 18-64, 63% |
| Age 5-17, 16% |
| Age 0-4, 6% |

2020

| Age 85+, 5% |
| Age 65-84, 16% |
| Age 18-64, 58% |
| Age 5-17, 15% |
| Age 0-4, 6% |

2050

Source: 2017 WA Office of Financial Management Growth Management Population Projections for Counties

By 2050, 21% of the region's population will be 65 or older.

The oldest age group (age 85+) is projected to grow at the fastest rate (+296%). Also, they are more likely to have a disability (73%) than younger populations.

People with Disabilities with Low Incomes

32%	35%	27%	28%	30%
Region	King	Kitsap	Pierce	Snohomish

Regional Average of Low-income: 20%
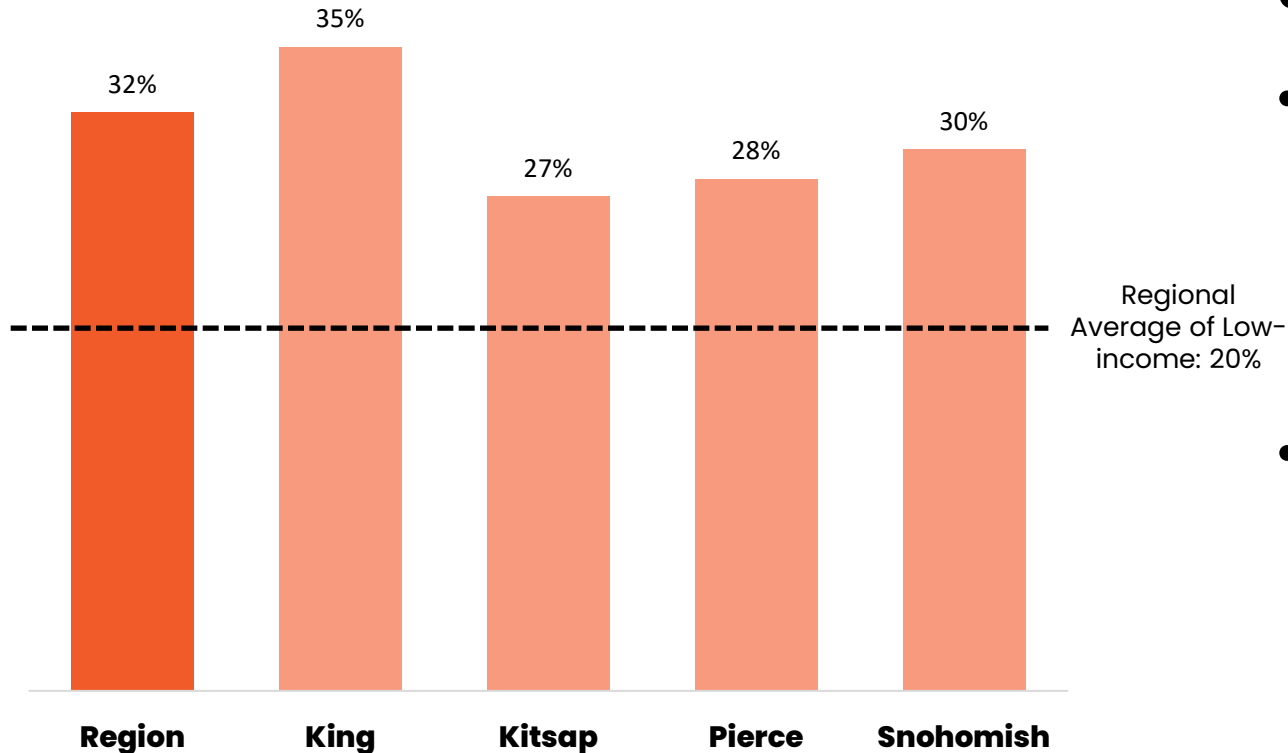
People with disabilities are over-represented in low-income and unemployed populations.

- In 2019, people with disabilities comprised 11% of the regional population, and 34% of them were low-income (regional avg: 20%).

- The unemployment rate of people without disabilities was 3.6% vs. people with disabilities was 8.1%.

WSDOT Consolidated Grant

Eligible Applicants: Nonprofits, tribes, public transit agencies, and local agencies in Washington state

Program Goal: to improve transportation within and between communities

Consolidated Grant provides funds for:
- Transportation programs serving older adults, people with disabilities, and others
- Purchases of new vehicles and other equipment
- Mobility management activities

WSDOT Consolidated Grant

- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) manages and allocates the Consolidated grants. WSDOT has its evaluation criteria developed for the statewide scoring.

- **PSRC recommends priority projects** for the state's evaluation by distributing regional priority rankings (A, B, C, D rankings) for the region.
  - WSDOT funds all "A" projects without an additional scoring process.
  - For "B" and "C" projects, points associated with each ranking are added to their statewide score. D rankings don't add any additional points (worth 0 points).

Priority Ranking Process for PSRC Region

PSRC provides regional priority rankings to the WSDOT for specialized transportation projects seeking Consolidated Grant funds in the PSRC region.

WSDOT

PSRC

WSDOT Call for Projects	Grant Application Due	PSRC Sponsor Presentation	PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Recommendations	PSRC Priority Rankings →	WSDOT Evaluation & Scoring	PSRC Involvement / WSDOT Award	Specialized Transportation Project Implementation
June 18, 2024	Sept. 17, 2024	October 2024	Nov. 2024-Jan. 2025		Feb.-April 2025	May 2025	Project begins July 1, 2025

PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Factors

- PSRC's regional priority ranking factors are designed to help **implement the region's Coordinated Mobility Plan**.

- Staff use "factors" to review and **organize the applications in an initial sorting**, which is less intensive than scoring:
    - Projects receive a **"Yes"** or **"No"** answer for each factor. Projects are then organized by the total number of "yes" responses.

#1. Project Type (Preservation vs. New/Expansion)

Preservation and capital projects that support <u>existing programs at existing service levels</u> receive a "yes."

#2. Support for PSRC's Coordinated Mobility Plan

Projects adequately address at least one "High Prioritized Strategy" that addresses key mobility needs receive a "yes."

Key Mobility Needs identified in the Plan

- Shorter travel times when taking regular transit or specialized transportation.

- More transportation services at times when they are needed.

- Accessible information about available services and language services.

- Better access to health and wellness destinations.

- Affordable transportation for families with low incomes.

- Connected ADA-accessible infrastructure.

- Better regional coordination to meet growing mobility needs.

Mobility Need #1: Shorter travel times when taking regular transit or specialized transportation

Strategy 1.1: Promote increased coordination between transportation providers to provide cross-jurisdiction and/or cross-agency transportation that reduces the need for long transfer wait times.

Potential Implementers: Transit agencies, specialized transportation providers, and mobility management programs.

Priority: High

Desired Outcome: All riders with special transportation needs experience reasonable transfer wait times, if needing to transfer at all, through regional coordination and improved timeliness of connections.

Potential Measure: Reduced transfer times, as measured by transit agency and/or specialized transportation agency data or other appropriate data sources.

Strategy 1.2: Improve on-time reliability and timeliness of transportation services for people with special transportation needs.

Potential Implementers: Transit agencies, specialized transportation providers, and mobility management programs.

Priority: Other

Desired Outcome: Transportation providers that serve people with special transportation needs have improved their on-time performance.

Potential Measures: On-time performance metrics of transportation providers.

Applications addressing "High" prioritized strategies receive a "yes"

Applications addressing "Other" strategies receive a "no"

#3. Uniqueness of Service

Applicants adequately explain the uniqueness of their programs AND how their projects <u>do not duplicate </u>others for <u>similar target populations within the same geographic area</u> receive a "yes."

#4. Financial Sustainability

Projects providing more than the <u>federal minimum required match</u> (operating: 50%, capital/mobility management: 20%) from local sources receive a "yes."

PSRC Regional Priority Ranking Factors - Example

Project Title	County	Sustaining or New/Expansion	Project Type	PSRC Review — Project Type (Sustaining vs. New/Exp.)	PSRC Review — Support for Coordinated Mobility Plan	PSRC Review — Uniqueness of Service	PSRC Review — Financial Sustainability	Total Number of "Yes" Responses
Project 1	C1	Sustaining	Operating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
Project 2	C2	Sustaining	Operating	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4
Project 3	C1	Sustaining	Operating	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	3
Project 4	C1&C3	Sustaining	Operating	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	3
Project 5	C1	New/Expansion	Capital	No	Yes	No	Yes	2
Project 6	C1	Sustaining	Operating	Yes	No	No	Yes	2
Project 7	C3	Sustaining	Mobility Management	Yes	No	Yes	No	2
Project 8	C2	Sustaining	Mobility Management	Yes	Yes	No	No	2
Project 9	C1&2	Sustaining	Capital	Yes	No	No	No	1
Project 10	C3	New/Expansion	Planning	No	No	No	No	0

NOTE: Final regional priority rankings will be determined at the deliberation meeting, using "Additional Factors for Consideration in Deliberation" developed by the committee

Additional Factors for Considerations

- **Geographical distribution of regional priority rankings**

- **Project types**

- **Agency equity** (# of projects per agency)

- **Compelling cases for agencies with limited resources**

- **Strategic Application of Federal/State Funds**

- **Coordination**

- **Acknowledge Importance of the Largest County Service Providers** (safety net projects)

Concerns heard from sponsors:

- Lack of data to report due to limited staff capacity and resources.

- Programs serving rural areas may not receive high rankings if the equity factor is considered.

- Specialized transportation projects are already addressing equity by serving priority populations covered in the plan.

Staff Proposals

1. Add "Meaningful Engagement & Communications" Factor. Assess whether a project sponsor engages individuals from equity focus areas when developing/maintaining programs.

- Pros: this element could encourage sponsors to implement more inclusive engagement strategies, which could help improve ridership or program participation.

- Potential issues/considerations: There is a need to discuss what "meaningful engagement" is to help decide which projects receive a "yes."

2. Conduct geographic analysis. Identify programs that provide service to or through EFAs. This could be a stand-alone factor, part of the "Uniqueness of Services" factor, or an additional consideration.

- Pros: PSRC can identify projects providing service to or through EFAs and help prioritize them.

- Potential issues: Regional-scale geographic analysis may not capture the true performance of programs. Also, programs providing countywide service would get a "yes" automatically, although they may not provide service to/from certain EFAs.

3. Assess Equity-related performance and goals. Assess if a project sponsor develops and tracks equity-related metrics (e.g. ridership by equity populations) to achieve equity goals.

- Pros: this will encourage sponsors to develop metrics to achieve regional equity goals. PSRC will have better data to assess the outcomes of specialized transportation programs.

- Potential issues/considerations: discussion regarding standardization of metrics by project type would be needed.

Discussion

- Do you have any suggestions on **how to further incorporate equity** into PSRC's Regional Priority Ranking Process?

- Do you have any **other ideas** for improvement?

Next Steps (Exact Dates TBD)

Spring 2024

- Engage EAC & SNTC (March-June)
- Continued discussion and revision of call for projects materials

Summer 2024: Call for projects

Fall 2024-Early 2025: Regional priority ranking deliberation and recommendation process

July 1, 2025: Awarded projects begin

Continuous improvement and updates to further equity goals

Thank You!

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Puget Sound Regional Council

"High" Prioritized Strategies identified in the Plan:

- Shorter travel times when taking regular transit or specialized transportation.

  - Strategy 1.1: Promote increased coordination between transportation providers to provide cross-jurisdiction and/or cross-agency transportation that reduces the need for long transfer wait times.

- More transportation services at times when they are needed.

  - Strategy 2.1: Expand service levels to provide regular transit and specialized transportation services at times they are needed, especially within equity focus areas.

- Accessible information about available services and language services.

  - **Strategy 3.1:** Conduct and tailor mobility management programs, such as travel training, mobility coalition, and information referral and assistance, to meet the needs of potential riders, including people with limited English proficiency.

  - **Strategy 3.2:** Coordinate to develop a comprehensive trip planning tool, like a One-Call/One-Click platform, to help riders with special transportation needs navigate and use available services, keeping in mind language, cultural, technological, and accessibility needs.

- Better access to health and wellness destinations.

  - **Strategy 4.1:** Strengthen and coordinate partnerships between healthcare and transportation providers, especially within equity focus areas, to better understand and address patients' unmet transportation needs and ensure that patients understand their transportation options.

- Affordable transportation for families with low incomes.

  - **Strategy 5.1:** Review and adjust fare structures and reduced fare programs through regional coordination to ensure they are fully accessible to low-income communities within service areas.

- Connected ADA-accessible infrastructure.

  - **Strategy 6.1:** Build connected, ADA-accessible facilities, especially around/within health and wellness destinations, transit stations, and equity focus areas.

- Better regional coordination to meet growing mobility needs.

  - **Strategy 7.1:** Improve regional coordination based on the federal example of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM).