

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Recommendations



Puget Sound Regional Council

PSRC is working in partnership with major metro Metropolitan Planning Organizations to expand funding opportunities for collaboration between local governments to bring resources to Areas of Persistent Poverty and rural communities and to improve, enhance and expand transportation infrastructure funding to accommodate increased construction costs and growing needs. PSRC priorities include:

- **Enhance Planning and Implementation Support for MPOs** – Provide enhanced support for the FHWA Metropolitan Planning Program through additional PL resources to ensure that PSRC can continue working with its local government members to address shared challenges driven by growth—such as transportation infrastructure needs, economic competitiveness and building housing. Expanded support will enable PSRC to:
 - Strengthen planning efforts by developing new data tools
 - Deepen engagement with rural communities, Tribes and active-duty military personnel
 - Deliver maintenance and preservation projects to maintain critical roadway and bridge infrastructure
 - Support freight network capabilities to quickly and cost effectively move goods to support commerce and the economy

Most critically, increased PL investment will empower PSRC to move beyond planning and into implementation. Our leadership is launching a housing research center at the University of Washington to

help increase housing supply and supporting initiatives to recapitalize Washington State Ferries. These are recent examples of how local government collaboration with the MPO is driving real solutions and effectively utilizing the PL program.

- **Ferry Programs** – Increase funding and policies to restore, improve and modernize the Washington State Ferries system to ensure reliable service for our Marine Highway System, including policies to streamline federal certification process for crew with the Coast Guard and TSA to ensure a strong workforce. The program has benefited the PSRC region, particularly for making connections to commerce, jobs and access to medical care for rural ferry communities. Last year, Kitsap Transit received \$13.5 million from the Passenger Ferry program to purchase a new fast ferry for the Kingston/Seattle route, to replace an older ferry that must be taken out of service.
- **Maintain Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Program** – Roadway safety is a top priority for communities across Puget Sound, as reflected in the Regional Transportation

Plan and PSRC's funding decisions. From 2010 to 2022, fatalities and serious injuries increased by 48%, with rural areas experiencing significantly higher fatality rates per capita. PSRC received two SS4A planning grants to develop a regional Safety Action Plan and support nearly 20 jurisdictions in creating local safety plans aimed at eliminating roadway fatalities. Small communities like Eatonville (population 2,970), which otherwise would not have had the capacity to access federal funds, created a safety plan to address dangerous road conditions near schools with the help of PSRC.

Continued support for this program—with a focus on implementation resources—is essential to help MPOs, local governments, and transportation agencies to turn safety plans into action, improve highway safety, and save lives.

About PSRC

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the greater Seattle area, develops policies and coordinates decisions about regional growth, transportation and economic development planning within King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties. PSRC is composed of nearly 100 members, including the four counties, cities and towns, ports, state and local transportation agencies, and Tribal governments within the region.

VISION 2050 is the cornerstone regional plan that includes a Regional Growth Strategy focusing on growth in the region's 30 designated centers and near transit. The goal of the plan is to sustain and create different types of urban communities, while preserving the region's working resource lands and open spaces. Forecasts show the central Puget Sound region will grow from 4 million people to 5.8 million people by 2050.

PSRC supports federal policies that advance solutions to achieve a thriving and sustainable Puget Sound region through leadership, visionary planning and collaboration.

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