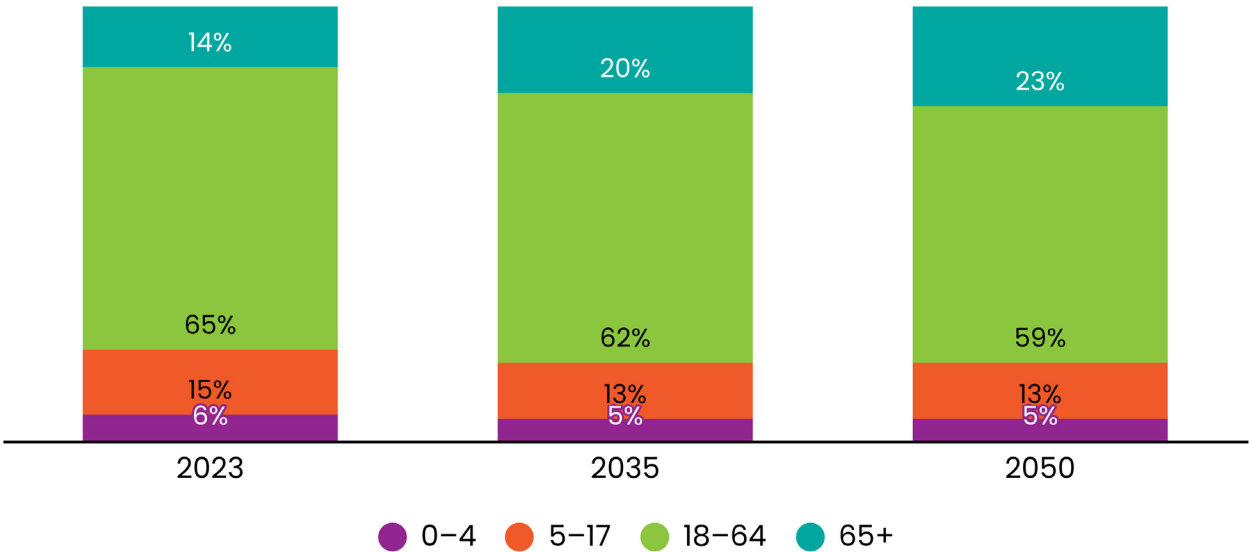


# Defining Older Adults in the Regional Transportation Plan

Older adults, defined as 65 years or older in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), have unique transportation needs and challenges. They are a growing part of the region’s population. In 2023, 14% of the region’s population was 65 years or older and they are projected to be 23% in 2050, making them the only age group projected to see their population share increase between now and 2050.<sup>1</sup>

Regional Population Estimates by Age Group



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample for 2023 and Washington State Office of Financial Management (April 1, 2025). Official Population Estimates for 2035 and 2050.

Puget Sound Regional Council uses the threshold of 65 years or older as it has traditionally been considered the age people retire, and transportation patterns shift from work trips to more social, errand, or medical-related trips. While adults 65 and older represented 14% of the region’s population in 2023, they accounted for 29% of all trips to medical facilities.<sup>2</sup> This age threshold is also consistent with reduced fare programs and other transportation programs that use age 65 or older for eligibility.

<sup>1</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management (April 1, 2025). Official Population Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Puget Sound Regional Council (2023). Household Travel Survey.

As people age, they experience increased changes in health that affect their mobility. Vision changes, for example, can impact how often and when older adults feel comfortable driving. An [AARP study](#) found that more than half of people over age 50 start to reduce or eliminate evening and night driving. Another health challenge among the aging population is an increase in disability status. Regionwide, over 30% of individuals aged 65 and older have a disability. This percentage rises sharply with age: more than 70% of adults over 85 have a disability, which can make it difficult to drive or walk to desired destinations.<sup>3</sup>

As people age, especially those aging in place, it is important to stay connected with friends and family for mental well-being. To support healthy aging, older adults need a transportation system that accommodates their specific needs and helps them stay engaged in their communities.

**Table 1. Older Adults Age 65+ by County, 2023**

County	Age 65+ Count	Age 65+ Share
Region	617,800	14%
King	311,300	14%
Kitsap	52,600	19%
Pierce	133,900	14%
Snohomish	120,100	14%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

**Table 2. Older Adults with a Disability by County, 2023**

County	Age 65–74 Count	Age 65–74 Share	Age 75–84 Count	Age 75–84 Share	Age 85+ Count	Age 85+ Share
Region	89,400	24%	69,000	41%	49,900	71%
King	40,300	21%	32,000	38%	28,700	73%
Kitsap	8,000	25%	6,300	40%	3,200	68%
Pierce	23,300	28%	16,800	44%	9,000	68%
Snohomish	17,900	24%	13,900	44%	9,100	70%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019–2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Public Use Microdata Sample

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample.

